



Angl. a. 1264

Homer



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P O P E's
ODYSSEY.

VOL. I. A

GEORGE R.

GEORGE, by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland: Defender of the Faith, &c. To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting: Whereas *Bernard Lintot* of Our City of London, Bookseller, hath by his Petition, humbly represented unto Us, ~~that he is now Printing a Translation, undertaken by Our Trusty and Well-beloved Alexander Pope, Esq; of the Odysey of Homer from the Greek, in Five Volumes in Folio upon large and small Paper, in Quarto upon Royal Paper, in Octavo and Duodecimo, with large Notes upon each Book, and that he has been at great Expence in carrying on the said Work, and the sole Right and Title of the Copy of the same being vested in the said Bernard Lintot, he has humbly besought Us to grant him Our Royal Privilege and Licence for the sole Printing and Publishing thereof for the term of fourteen Years:~~ We are therefore graciously pleased to gratify him in his Request, and do by these Presents, agreeable to the Statute in that behalf made and provided, for Us, Our Heirs and Successors, give and grant unto him the said *Bernard Lintot*, his Executors, Administrators and Assigns, Our Royal Privilege and Licence for the sole Printing and Publishing of the said Translation of the *Odysey of Homer*, for and during the term of fourteen Years, to be computed from the Day of the Date hereof. Strictly forbidding and prohibiting all Our Subjects within Our Kingdoms of Great Britain, and Ireland, and other Our Dominions, to reprint or abridge the same, either in the like, or any other Volume or Volumes whatsoever, or to impart, buy, vend, utter or distribute any Copies of the same or any part thereof Reprinted beyond the Seas, within the said Term of fourteen Years, without the Consent and Approbation of the said *Bernard Lintot*, his Heirs, Executors and Assigns, by Writing under his or their Hands and Seals first had and obtained, as they ~~and every of them offending herein will answer~~ the contrary at their Perils. Whereof the Master, Wardens, and Company of Stationers of Our City of London, the Commissioners and other Officers of Our Customs, and all other Our Officers and Ministers whom it may concern are to take Notice, that due Obedience be given to Our Pleasure herein signified. Given at Our Court at St. James's the Nineteenth Day of February 1724-5. In the Eleventh Year of our Reign.

By His Majesty's Command

TOWNSHEND.



HOMERVS De aervo capite olim penus illustri. Omulom Brunzellium, natus
 Musaeo celeberrimi Viri Richardi Mead M.D. Aniqui, ima Homeri statua corre-
 pto, ut decoribus laetaretur. Constantinopoli Justiniano Imperante, incendio perire
 didit. Statua autem illius hoc est caput, ex Incendi, ruina feliciter servata
 cum ex oru fignis et foras pignis, cum ex manifestis dignis malis indicis conrectari

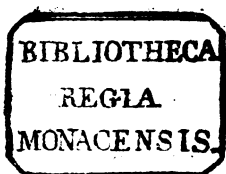
THE
ODYSSEY
OF
HOMER.

Translated from the *GREEK*.

VOL. I.



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MDCCXXV.



A GENERAL VIEW of the
EPIC POEM,
And of the
ILIAD and ODYSSEY.
Extracted from *BOSSU.*

SECT. I.

THE Fables of Poets were originally employ'd in representing the *Divine Nature* *, according to the notion then conceived of it. This sublime Subject occasioned the first Poets to be called Divines, and Poetry *the Language of the Gods*. They divided the divine Attributes into so many Persons; because the infirmity of a human Mind cannot sufficiently conceive, or explain, so much Power and Action in a Simplicity so great and indivisible as that

* *Of the Nature of Epic Poetry.*

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of

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of God. And perhaps they were also jealous of the advantages they reap'd from such excellent and exalted learning, and of which they thought the vulgar part of mankind was not worthy.

They could not describe the Operations of this Almighty Cause, without speaking at the same time of its Effects: so that to Divinity they added *Physiology*, and treated of both, without quitting the umbrages of their Allegorical Expressions.

But *Man* being the chief and the most noble of all that God produced, and nothing being so proper, or more useful to Poets than this Subject; they added it to the former, and treated of the doctrine of *Morality* after the same manner as they did that of Divinity and Philosophy: And from Morality thus treated, is form'd that kind of Poem and Fable which we call *Epic*.

The Poets did the same in Morality, that the Divines had done in Divinity. But that infinite variety of the actions and operations of the Divine Nature, (to which our understanding bears so small a proportion) did as it were force them upon dividing the single Idea of the Only One God into several Persons, under the different names of *Jupiter*, *Juno*, *Neptune* and the rest.

And on the other hand, the nature of Moral Philosophy being such, as never to treat of things in particular, but in general; the Epic Poets were obliged to unite in one single Idea, in one and the same Person, and in an Action which appeared singular, all that look'd like it in different persons, and in various actions; which might be thus contained as so many *Species* under their *Genus*. The

The Presence of the Deity, and the Care such an august Cause is to be supposed to take about any action, obliges the Poet to represent this action as great, important, and managed by * Kings and Princes. It obliges him likewise to think and speak in an elevated way above the vulgar, and in a style that may in some sort keep up the character of the Divine Persons he introduces. † To this end serve the poetical and figurative Expression, and the Majesty of the Heroick Verse.

But all this, being divine and surprising, may quite ruin all Probability: Therefore the Poet should take a peculiar care as to that point, since his chief aim is to instruct, and without Probability any action is less likely to persuade.

Lastly, since Precepts ought to be ‡ concise, to be the more easily conceiv'd, and less oppress the memory; and since nothing can be more effectual to this end than proposing one single Idea, and collecting all things so well together, as to be present to our minds all at once; therefore the Poets have reduc'd all to one § single action, under one and the same design, and in a body whose members and parts should be homogeneous.

What we have observ'd of the nature of the Epic Poem, gives us a just Idea of it, and we may define it thus:

* *Res gesta regumque ducumque.* Hor. Art. Poet.

† *Cui mens diviniior atque os Magna sonaturum, des Nominis hujus honorem.* Horat.

‡ *Quicquid precipies esto brevis, ut citò dicta percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles.* Hor. Poet.

§ *Denique sit quodvis simplex duntaxat, & unum.* ibid.

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“ The Epic Poem is a discourse invented by
“ art, to form the Manners, by such instructions
“ as are disguis’d under the allegories of some
“ one important Action, which is related in verse,
“ after a probable, diverting, and surprizing manner.

S E C T. II.

* IN every design which a man deliberately undertakes, the end he proposes is the first thing in his mind, and that by which he governs the whole work, and all its parts: Thus since the End of the Epic Poem is to regulate the Manners, ’tis with this first view the Poet ought to begin.

But there is a great difference between the Philosophical and the Poetical doctrine of Manners. The Schoolmen content themselves with treating of Virtues and Vices in general: the instructions they give are proper for all States, People, and for all Ages. But the Poet has a nearer regard to his own Country, and the necessities of his own nation. With this design he makes choice of some piece of morality, the most proper and just he can imagine: And in order to press this home, he makes less use of the force of Reasoning, than of the power of Insinuation; accommodating himself to the particular customs and inclinations of those, who are to be the subject, or the readers, of his work.

* *The Fable of the Iliad.*

Let

Let us now see how *Homer* has acquitted himself in these respects.

He saw the *Grecians*, for whom he design'd his Poem, were divided into as many States as they had capital Cities. Each was a Body Politick apart, and had its form of government independent from all the rest. And yet these distinct States were very often obliged to unite together in one body against their common Enemies. These were two very different sorts of Government, such as could not be comprehended in one maxim of morality, and in one single Poem.

The Poet therefore has made two distinct Fables of them. The one is for *Greece* in general, united into one body, but compos'd of parts independent on each other; and the other for each particular state, considered as they were in time of peace, without the former circumstances and the necessity of being united.

As for the first sort of government, in the Union or rather in the Confederacy of many independent States; experience has always made it appear, "That nothing so much causes success as a due subordination, and a right understanding among the chief commanders. And on the other hand, the inevitable ruin of such confederacies proceeds from the heats, jealousies and ambition of the different leaders, and the discontents of submitting to a single General." All sorts of States, and in particular the *Grecians*, had dearly experienc'd this truth. So that the most useful and necessary instruction that could be given them, was, to lay before their eyes the loss

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which

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which both the People and the Princes must of necessity suffer, by the ambition, discord, and obstinacy of the latter.

Homer then has taken for the foundation of his Fable this great Truth; That a Misunderstanding between Princes is the Ruin of their own States. "I sing (says he) the Anger of *Achilles*, so pernicious to the *Grecians*, and the cause of so many Heroes deaths, occasioned by the Discord and Separation of *Agamemnon* and that Prince.

But that this truth may be compleatly and fully known, there is need of a second to support it. 'Tis necessary in such a design, not only to represent the Confederate States at first disagreeing among themselves, and from thence unfortunate; but to show the same States afterwards reconciled and united, and of consequence victorious.

Let us now see how he has joyn'd all these in one general action.

"Several Princes independent on one another
 "were united against a common enemy. The
 "person whom they had elected their General,
 "offers an affront to the most valiant of all the
 "Confederates. This offended Prince is so far
 "provoked, as to relinquish the Union, and obstinately refuse to fight for the common cause.
 "This Mis-understanding gives the enemy such
 "an advantage, that the Allies are very near
 "quitting their design with dishonour. He himself, who made the separation, is not exempt
 "from sharing the misfortune which he brought
 "upon his party. For having permitted his intimate

mate friend to succour them in a great necessity, this friend is killed by the enemy's General. Thus the contending Princes being both made wiser at their own cost, are reconcil'd, and unite again: Then this valiant Prince not only obtains the victory in the publick cause, but revenges his private wrongs by killing with his own hands the author of the death of his friend.

This is the first Platform of the Poem, and the Fiction, which reduces into one important and universal Action all the particulars upon which it turns.

In the next place it must be render'd Probable by the circumstances of times, places and persons; Some persons must be found out, already known by History or otherwise, whom we may with Probability make the actors and personages of this Fable. *Homer* has made choice of the siege of *Troy*, and feign'd that this action happened there. To a Phantom of his brain, whom he would paint valiant and cholerick, he has given the name of *Achilles*; that of *Agamemnon* to his General; that of *Hector* to the Enemy's Commander, and so to the rest.

Besides, he was oblig'd to accommodate himself to the manners, customs, and genius of the *Greeks* his Auditors, the better to make them attend to the instruction of his Poem; and to gain their approbation by praising them: So that they might the better forgive him the representation of their own faults in some of his chief Personages. He admirably discharges all these duties,

by making these brave Princes and those victorious people all *Grecians*, and the fathers of those he had a mind to commend.

But not being content, in a work of such a length, to propose only the principal point of the Moral, and to fill up the rest with useless ornaments and foreign incidents, he extends this Moral by all its necessary consequences. As for instance in the subject before us, 'tis not enough to know, that a good understanding ought always to be maintain'd among Confederates: 'Tis likewise of equal importance, that if there happens any division, care must be taken to keep it secret from the enemy, that their ignorance of this advantage may prevent their making use of it. And in the second place, when their concord is but counterfeit and only in appearance, one should never press the enemy too closely; for this would discover the weakness which we ought to conceal from them.

The Episode of *Patroclus* most admirably furnishes us with these two instructions. For when he appear'd in the arms of *Achilles*, the *Trojans*, who took him for that Prince now reconciled and united to the Confederates, immediately gave ground, and quitted the advantages they had before over the *Greeks*. But *Patroclus*, who should have been contented with this success, presses upon *Hector* too boldly, and by obliging him to fight, soon discovers that it was not the true *Achilles* who was clad in his armour, but a Heroe of much inferior prowess. So that *Hector* kills him, and regains those advantages which the
Trojans

Trojans had lost, on the opinion that *Achilles* was reconciled.

S E C T. III.

* *THE Odyssey* was not design'd, like the *Iliad*, for the instruction of all the States of *Greece* join'd in one body, but for each State in particular. As a State is composed of two parts; the Head which commands, and the Members which obey; there are instructions requisite to both, to teach the one to govern, and the others to submit to Government.

There are two Virtues necessary to one in authority, Prudence to order, and Care to see his orders put in execution. The Prudence of a Politician is not acquired but by a long experience in all sorts of business, and by an acquaintance with all the different forms of Governments and States. The Care of the Administration suffers not him that has the Government to rely upon others, but requires his own presence: And Kings who are absent from their States, are in danger of losing them, and give occasion to great disorders and confusion.

These two points may be easily united in one and the same man. “A King forsakes his Kingdom to visit the courts of several Princes, where he learns the manners and customs of different nations. From hence there naturally arises a vast number of incidents, of dangers,

* *The Fable of the Odyssey.*

“and

“ and of adventures, very useful for a Political Institution. On the other side, this Absence gives way to the disorders which happen in his own kingdom, and which end not till his return, whose presence only can re-establish all things.” Thus the Absence of a King has the same effects in this Fable, as the Division of the Princes had in the former.

The Subjects have scarce any need but of one general maxim, which is, To suffer themselves to be govern'd, and to obey faithfully; whatever reason they may imagine against the orders they receiv'd. It is easy to join this instruction with the other, by bestowing on this wise and industrious Prince such Subjects, as in his absence would rather follow their own judgment than his commands: and by demonstrating the misfortunes which this disobedience draws upon them, the evil consequences which almost infallibly attend these particular notions, which are entirely different from the general Idea of him who ought to govern.

But as it was necessary that the Princes in the *Iliad* should be cholerick and quarrellous, so it is necessary in the Fable of the *Odyssey* that the chief person should be sage and prudent. This raises a difficulty in the Fiction; because this person ought to be absent for the two reasons aforementioned, which are essential to the Fable, and which constitute the principal aim of it: But he cannot absent himself, without offending against another maxim of equal importance; viz. That a King should upon no account leave his Country.

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It is true, there are sometimes such necessities as sufficiently excuse the Prudence of a Politician in this point. But such a necessity is a thing important enough of it self to supply matter for another Poem, and this multiplication of the action would be vicious. To prevent which in the first place, this Necessity and the departure of the Heroe must be disjoin'd from the Poem; and in the second place, the Heroe having been oblig'd to absent himself, for a reason antecedent to the action and plac'd distinct from the Fable, he ought not so far to embrace this opportunity of instructing himself, as to absent himself voluntarily from his own Government. For at this rate, his Absence would be meerly voluntary, and one might with reason lay to his charge all the disorders which might arrive.

Thus in the constitution of the Fable, he ought not to take for his action, and for the foundation of his Poem, the Departure of a Prince from his own country, nor his voluntary stay in any other place; but his Return, and this return retarded against his will. This is the first Idea *Homer* gives us of it. * His Hero appears at first in a desolate Island, sitting upon the side of the Sea, which with tears in his eyes he looks upon as the obstacle that had so long oppos'd his Return, and detain'd him from revisiting his own dear Country.

And lastly, since this forc'd delay might more naturally and usually happen to such as make

* *Odyssey* 5.

voyages

voyages by sea; *Homer* has judiciously made choice of a Prince whose Kingdom was in an Island.

Let us see then how he has feign'd all this Action, making his Hero a person in years, because Years are requisite to instruct a man in Prudence and Policy.

"A Prince had been oblig'd to forsake his native Country, and to head an Army of his Subjects in a foreign expedition. Having gloriously perform'd this enterprize, he was marching home again, and conducting his Subjects to his own State. But spite of all the attempts, with which his eagerness to return had inspir'd him, he was stopp'd by the way by tempests for several years, and cast upon several countries differing from each other in Manners and Government. In these dangers his Companions, not always following his orders, perish'd through their own fault. The Grandees of his country strangely abuse his absence, and raise no small disorders at home. They consume his estate, conspire to destroy his son, would constrain his Queen to accept of one of them for her Husband; and indulge themselves in all violence, so much the more, because they were persuaded he would never return. But at last he returns, and discovering himself only to his son and some others, who had continu'd firm to him, he is an eye-witness of the insolence of his enemies, punishes them according to their deserts, and restores to his Island that tranquillity and repose to which they had been strangers during his absence.

As.

As the Truth, which serves for foundation to this fiction is, that the Absence of a person from his own home, or his neglect of his own affairs, is the cause of great disorders: So the Principal point of the Action, and the most Essential one, is the Absence of the Heroe. This fills almost all the Poem: For not only this real absence lasted several years, but even when the Heroe returned, he does not discover himself; and this prudent disguise, from whence he reap'd so much advantage, has the same effect upon the Authors of the disorders, and all others who knew him not, as his real absence had before, so that he is absent as to them, 'till the very moment of their punishment.

After the Poet had thus composed his Fable, and join'd the Fiction to the Truth, he then makes choice of *Ulysses*, the King of the Isle of *Ithaca*, to maintain the character of his chief Personage, and bestow'd the rest upon *Telemachus*, *Penelope*, *Antinous*, and others, whom he calls by what names he pleases.

I shall not here insist upon the many excellent advices, which are so many parts, and natural consequences of the fundamental Truth; and which the Poet very dextrously lays down in those fictions, which are the Episodes and Members of the entire Action. Such for instance are these advices: Not to intrude one's self into the Mysteries of Government, which the Prince keeps secret: This is represented to us by the winds shut up in a bull-hide, which the miserable Companions of *Ulysses* would needs be so foolish as to pry into. Not to suffer one's self to be led away by the seeming Charms

Charms of an idle and inactive life, to which the *Sirens Songs* invited *. Not to suffer one's self to be sensualiz'd by pleasures, like those who were chang'd into brutes by *Circe*: And a great many other points of Morality necessary for all sorts of people.

This Poem is more useful to the People than the *Iliad*, where the subjects suffer rather by the ill conduct of their Princes, than through their own miscarriages. But in the *Odyssey*, 'tis not the fault of *Ulysses* that is the ruin of his Subjects. This wise Prince leaves untry'd no method to make them partakers of the benefit of his return. Thus the Poet in the *Iliad* says, "He sings the anger of *Achilles*, which had caused the death of so many *Grecians*;" and on the contrary, in the † *Odyssey* he tells his Readers, "That the Subjects perished through their own fault."

S E C T. IV.

‡ *ARISTOTLE* bestows great Encomiums upon *Homér* for the Simplicity of his design, because he has included in one single part all that happen'd at the siege of *Troy*. And to this he opposes the ignorance of some Poets who imagined that the Unity of the Fable or Action was sufficiently preserved by the Unity of the Heroe:

* *Improba Siren desidia.* Horat.

† Αυται γάρ σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ἔλοντο. *Odysl.* i.

‡ *Of the Unity of the Fable.*

and

and who compos'd their *Theseids*, *Heracleids*, and the like, wherein they only heap'd up in one Poem every thing that happen'd to one Personage.

He finds fault with those Poets who were for reducing the Unity of the *Fable* into the Unity of the *Herae*, because one Man may have performed several adventures, which 'tis impossible to reduce under any one and simple head. This reducing of all things to Unity and Simplicity is what *Horace* likewise makes his first Rule.

Denique sit quodvis simplex dumtaxat, & unum.

According to these Rules, it will be allowable to make use of several Fables; or (to speak more correctly) of several Incidents which may be divided into several Fables; provided they are so ordered, that the Unity of the Fable be not spoil'd. This liberty is still greater in the Epic Poem, because 'tis of a larger extent, and ought to be entire and compleat.

I will explain my self more distinctly by the Practice of *Homer*.

No doubt but one might make four distinct Fables out of these four following Instructions.

1. *Division between those of the same Party exposes them entirely to their enemies.*

2. *Conceal your Weakness, and you will be dreaded as much, as if you had none of those imperfections, of which they are ignorant.*

3. *When your strength is only feign'd, and founded only in the Opinion of others; never venture so far as if your strength was real.*

4. *The*

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4. *The more you agree together, the less hurt can your Enemies do you.*

'Tis plain, I say, that each of these particular Maxims might serve for the Ground-work of a Fiction, and one might make four distinct Fables out of them. May one not then put all these into one single *Epopœa*? Not unless one single Fable can be made out of all. The Poet indeed may have so much skill as to unite all into one Body, as Members and Parts, each of which taken asunder would be imperfect; and if he joins them so, as that this Conjunction shall be no hindrance at all to the Unity and the regular Simplicity of the Fable. This is what *Hommer* has done with such success in the composition of the *Iliad*.

1. *The Division between Achilles and his Allies tended to the ruin of their Designs.* 2. *Patroclus comes to their relief in the Armour of this Heroe, and Hector retreats.* 3. *But this young Man pushing the Advantage, which his disguise gave him, too far, ventures to engage with Hector himself; but not being master of Achilles's strength (whom he only represented in outward appearance) he is killed, and by this means leaves the Grecian Affairs in the same disorder, from which in that disguise he came to free them.* 4. *Achilles provoked at the Death of his Friend, is reconciled, and revenges his loss by the death of Hector.* These various incidents being thus united, do not make different Actions and Fables, but are only the un-
compleat

compleat and unfinish'd parts of one and the same Action and Fable, which alone can be said to be compleat and entire: And all these Maxims of the Moral, are easily reduc'd into these two parts, which in my opinion cannot be separated without enervating the force of both. The two parts are these, * That a right understanding is the preservation, and Discord the destruction of States.

Though then the Poet has made use of two parts in his Poems, each of which might have serv'd for a Fable, as we have observ'd: Yet this Multiplication cannot be called a vicious and irregular *Polymythia*, contrary to the necessary Unity and Simplicity of the Fable; but it gives the Fable another qualification, altogether necessary and regular, namely its Perfection and finishing stroke.

S E C T. V.

† THE Action of a Poem is the Subject which the Poet undertakes, proposes, and builds upon. So that the Moral and the Instructions which are the end of the Epic Poem are not the Matter of it. Those the Poets leave in their Allegorical and figurative obscurity. They only give notice at the *Exordium*, that they sing some Action. The *Revenge of Achilles*, the *Return of Ulysses*, &c.

* *Concordiâ res parva crescant: discordiâ magna dilabuntur. Sallust. de bello Jug.*

† Of the Action of the Epic Poem.

Since

xviii *A VIEW of the EPIC POEM,*

Since then the Action is the Matter of a Fable, it is evident that whatever incidents are essential to the Fable, or constitute a part of it, are necessary also to the Action, and are parts of the Epic Matter, none of which ought to be omitted. Such, for instance, are the contention of *Agamemnon* and *Achilles*, the slaughter *Hector* makes in the *Grecian* Army, the Re-union of the *Greek* Princes; and lastly, the Resettlement and Victory which was the consequence of that Re-union.

There are four qualifications in the Epic Action: the first is its *Unity*, the second its *Integrity*, the third its *Importance*, the fourth its *Duration*.

The Unity of the Epic Action, as well as the Unity of the Fable, does not consist either in the Unity of the Heroe, or in the Unity of Time: Three things I suppose are necessary to it. The first is, to make use of no Episode but what arises from the very platform and foundation of the Action, and is as it were a natural member of the body. The second is, exactly to unite these Episodes and these Members with one another. And the third is, never to finish any Episode so as it may seem to be an entire Action; but to let each Episode still appear in its own particular nature, as the member of a body, and as a part of it self not compleat.

* *Aristotle* not only says that the Epic Action should be One, but adds, that it should be entire, perfect, and compleat, and for this purpose ought to have a *Beginning*, a *Middle*, and an *End*. These three parts of a whole are too generally

* *Of the Beginning, Middle, and End of the Action.*

and

and universally denoted by the words, Beginning, Middle, and End; we may interpret, them more precisely, and say, That the Causes and Designs of an Action are the Beginning: That the Effects of these Causes, and the Difficulties that are met with in the execution of these designs, are the Middle; and that the Unravelling and Resolution of these difficulties are the End.

- * *Homer's* design in the *Iliad* is to relate the Anger and Revenge of *Achilles*. The Beginning of this Action is the Change of *Achilles* from a calm to a passionate temper. The Middle is the Effects of his Passion, and all the illustrious Deaths, it is the Cause of. The end of this same Action is the Return of *Achilles* to his calmness of temper again. All was quiet in the *Grecian* Camp, when *Agamemnon* their General provokes *Apollo* against them, whom he was willing to appease afterwards at the cost and prejudice of *Achilles*, who had no part in his fault. This then is an exact Beginning: It supposes nothing before, and requires after it the Effects of this Anger. *Achilles* revenges himself, and that is an exact Middle; it supposes before it the Anger of *Achilles*, this Revenge is the Effect of it. Then this Middle requires after it the Effects of this Revenge, which is the Satisfaction of *Achilles*: for the Revenge had not been compleat, unless *Achilles* had been satisfied. By this means the Poet makes his Heroe, after he was glutted by the Mischief he had done to *Agamemnon*, by the death

* *The Action of the Iliad.*

of

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of *Hector*, and the Honour he did his Friend, by insulting o'er his Murderer; he makes him, I say, to be moved by the Tears and Misfortunes of King *Priam*. We see him as calm at the End of the Poem, during the Funeral of *Hector*, as he was at the Beginning of the Poem, whilst the Plague raged among the *Grecians*. This End is just, since the Calmness of temper *Achilles* re-enjoy'd, is only an Effect of the Revenge which ought to have preceded: And after this no Body expects any more of his Anger. Thus has *Homer* been very exact in the Beginning, Middle and End of the Action he made choice of for the subject of his *Iliad*.

* His Design in the *Odysssey* was to describe the Return of *Ulysses* from the Siege of *Troy*, and his Arrival at *Ithaca*. He opens this Poem with the complaints of *Minerva* against *Neptune*, who opposed the Return of this Heroe, and against *Calypso* who detain'd him in an Island from *Ithaca*. Is this a Beginning? No; doubtless, the Reader would know why *Neptune* is displeased with *Ulysses*, and how this Prince came to be with *Calypso*? He would know how he came from *Troy* thither? The Poet answers his Demands out of the Mouth of *Ulysses* himself, who relates these things, and begins the Action, by the Recital of his Travels from the City of *Troy*. It signifies little whether the Beginning of the Action be the Beginning of the Poem. The Beginning of this Action is that which happens to *Ulysses*,

* The Action of the *Odysssey*.

when

when upon his leaving *Troy* he bends his Course for *Ithaca*. The Middle comprehends all the Misfortunes he endured, and all the Disorders of his own Government. The End is the re-instating of this Hero in the peaceable possession of his Kingdom, where he was acknowledg'd by his Son, his Wife, his Father, and several others. The Poet was sensible he should have ended ill had he gone no farther than the death of these Princes, who were the Rivals and Enemies of *Ulysses*, because the Reader might have look'd for some Revenge which the Subjects of these Princes might have taken, on him who had kill'd their Sovereigns: But this Danger over, and the People vanquished and quieted, there was nothing more to be expected. The Poem and the Action have all their Parts, and no more.

But the Order of the *Odyssey* differs from that of the *Iliad*, in that the *Poem* does not begin with the Beginning of the *Action*.

* The *Causes of the Action* are also what the Poet is obliged to give an Account of. There are three sorts of Causes, the Humours, the Interests, and the Designs of Men; and these different Causes of an Action are likewise often the Causes of one another, every Man taking up those Interests in which his Humour engages him, and forming those Designs to which his Humour and Interest incline him. Of all these the Poet ought to inform his Readers, and render them conspicuous in his principal Personages.

* *Of the Causes and Beginning of the Action.*

VOL. I.

b

Homer

Homer has ingeniously begun his *Odyssey* with the Transactions at *Ithaca*, during the absence of *Ulysses*. If he had begun with the Travels of his Hero, he would scarce have spoken of any one else, and a man might have read a great deal of the Poem, without conceiving the least Idea of *Telemachus*, *Penelope*, or her Suitors, who had so great a share in the Action; but in the Beginning he has pitch'd upon, besides these Personages, whom he discovers, he represents *Ulysses* in his full Length, and from the very first opening one sees the Interest which the Gods take in the Action.

The Skill and Care of the same Poet may be seen likewise in inducing his Personages in the first Book of his *Iliad*, where he discovers the Humours, the Interests, and the Designs of *Agamemnon*, *Achilles*, *Hector*, *Ulysses*, and several others, and even of the Deities. And in his Second he makes a Review of the *Grecian* and *Trojan* Armies; which is full Evidence, that all we have here said is very necessary.

* As these *Causes* are the *Beginning* of the Action, the opposite Designs against that of the Hero are the *Middle* of it, and form that Difficulty or *Intrigue*, which makes up the greatest part of the Poem; the Solution or *Unravelling* commences when the Reader begins to see that difficulty remov'd, and the doubts clear'd up. *Homer* has divided each of his Poems into two Parts, and

* *Of the Middle or Intrigue of the Action.*

has

has put a particular Intrigue, and the Solution of it, into each Part.

The first Part of the *Iliad* is the Anger of *Achilles*, who is for revenging himself upon *Agamemnon* by the means of *Hector* and the *Trojans*. The *Intrigue* comprehends the three days Fight, which happen'd in the Absence of *Achilles*: and it consists on one side in the resistance of *Agamemnon* and the *Grecians*; and on the other in the revengeful and inexorable Humour of *Achilles*, which would not suffer him to be reconcil'd. The Loss of the *Grecians* and the Despair of *Agamemnon*, prepare for a Solution by the satisfaction which the incens'd Hero receiv'd from it. The death of *Patroclus* join'd to the Offers of *Agamemnon*, which of it self had prov'd ineffectual, remove this Difficulty, and make the Unravelling of the first part.

This death is likewise the Beginning of the second Part; since it puts *Achilles* upon the design of revenging himself on *Hector*. But the design of *Hector* is opposite to that of *Achilles*; This *Trojan* is valiant, and resolv'd to stand on his own Defence. This Valour and Resolution of *Hector*, are on his part the cause of the Intrigue. All the Endeavours *Achilles* used to meet with *Hector* and be the death of him; and the contrary Endeavours of the *Trojan* to keep out of his reach, and defend himself; are the intrigue; which comprehends the battle of the last day. The Unravelling begins at the death of *Hector*; and besides that, it contains the insulting of *Achilles* over his Body, the Honours he paid to *Patroclus*, and the

Intreaties of King *Priam*. The regrets of this King and the other *Trojans*, in the sorrowful Obsequies they paid to *Hector's* body, end the Unravelling; they justify the satisfaction of *Achilles*, and demonstrate his Tranquillity.

The first part of the *Odyssey* is the Return of *Ulysses* into *Ithaca*. *Neptune* opposes it by raising tempests, and this makes the Intrigue. The Unravelling is the arrival of *Ulysses* upon his own Island, where *Neptune* could offer him no farther injury. The second Part is the re-instating this Hero in his own Government. The Princes that are his Rivals, oppose him, and this is a fresh Intrigue: The Solution of it begins at their deaths, and is compleated as soon as the *Ithacans* were appeas'd.

These two Parts in the *Odyssey* have not one common Intrigue. The Anger of *Achilles* forms both the Intrigues in the *Iliad*; and it is so far the Matter of this *Epopœa*, that the very Beginning and End of this Poem depend on the Beginning and End of this Anger. But let the Desire *Achilles* had to revenge himself, and the Desire *Ulysses* had to return to his own Country, be never so near ally'd, yet we cannot place them under one and the same Notion: For that Desire of *Ulysses* is not a Passion that begins and ends in the Poem with the Action; 'tis a natural Habit; nor does the Poet propose it for his Subject as he does the Anger of *Achilles*.

We have already observ'd what is meant by the *Intrigue*, and the *Unravelling* thereof; let us now say something of the Manner of forming both.

both. These two should arise naturally out of the very Essence and Subject of the Poem, and are to be deduc'd from thence. Their Conduct is so exact and natural, that it seems as if their Action had presented them with whatever they inserted, without putting themselves to the Trouble of a farther Inquiry.

What is more usual and natural to Warriors, than Anger, Heat, Passion, and Impatience of bearing the least Affront or Disrespect? This is what forms the Intrigue of the *Iliad*; and every thing we read there is nothing else but the Effect of this Humour and these Passions.

What more natural and usual Obstacle to those who take Voyages, than the Sea, the Winds, and the Storms? *Homer* makes this the Intrigue of the first Part of the *Odyssey*: And for the second, he makes use of almost the infallible effect of the long Absence of a Master, whose return is quite despair'd of, viz. the Insolence of his Servants and Neighbours, the Danger of his Son and Wife, and the Sequestration of his Estate. Besides an Absence of almost twenty Years, and the insupportable Fatigues join'd to the Age of which *Ulysses* then was, might induce him to believe that he should not be own'd by those who thought him dead, and whose Interest it was to have him really so. Therefore if he had presently declared who he was, and had call'd himself *Ulysses*, they would easily have destroy'd him as an Impostor, before he had an Opportunity to make himself known.

There could be nothing more natural nor more necessary than this ingenious Disguise, to which the Advantages his Enemies had taken of his Absence had reduced him, and to which his long Misfortunes had inur'd him. This allow'd him an opportunity, without hazarding any thing, of taking the best measures he could, against those persons who could not so much as mistrust any harm from him. This way was afforded him by the very Nature of his Action, to execute his Designs, and overcome the Obstacles it cast before him. And 'tis this contest between the Prudence and the Dissimulation of a single Man on one hand, and the ungovernable Insolence of so many Rivals on the other, which constitutes the Intrigue of the second Part of the *Odyssey*.

* If the *Plot* or *Intrigue* must be natural, and such as springs from the very Subject, as has been already urg'd; then the *Winding up* of the Plot, by a more sure claim, must have this Qualification, and be a probable consequence of all that went before. As this is what the Readers regard more than the rest, so should the Poet be more exact in it. This is the End of the Poem, and the last Impression that is to be stamp'd upon them.

We shall find this in the *Odyssey*. *Ulysses* by a Tempest is cast upon the Island of the *Phæacians*, to whom he discovers himself, and desires they would favour his Return to his own Country which was not very far distant. One cannot

* *Of the End or Unravelling of the Action.*

see

see any reason why the King of this Island should refuse such a reasonable Request, to a Hero whom he seem'd to have in great esteem. The *Phæaci-ans* indeed had heard him tell the Story of his Adventures; and in this fabulous recital consist-
ed all the advantage that could derive from his Presence; for the Art of War which they admir-
ed in him, his Undauntedness under Dangers, his indefatigable Patience, and other Virtues, were such as these Islanders were not used to. All their Talent lay in singing and dancing, and what-
soever was charming in a quiet life. And here we see how dextrously *Homer* prepares the Inci-
dents he makes use of. These People could do no less, for the Account with which *Ulysses* had so much entertain'd them, than afford him a Ship and a safe Convoy, which was of little expence or trouble to them.

When he arriv'd, his long Absence, and the Travels which had disfigur'd him, made him altogether unknown; and the Danger he would have incurr'd, had he discover'd himself too soon, forc'd him to a Disguise: Lastly, this Disguise gave him an Opportunity of surprizing those young Suitors, who for several years together had been accustomed to nothing but to sleep well, and fare daintily.

It was from these Examples that *Aristotle* drew this Rule, "that Whatever concludes the Poem should so spring from the very constitution of the Fable, as if it were a necessary, or at least a probable consequence.

S E C T. VI.

*THE *Time* of the Epic Action is not fix'd, like that of the Dramatick Poem: It is much longer, for an uninterrupted Duration is much more necessary in an Action which one sees and is present at, than in one which we only read or hear repeated. Besides Tragedy is fuller of Passion, and consequently of such a Violence as cannot admit of so long a Duration.

The *Iliad* containing an Action of *Anger* and *Violence*, the Poet allows it but a short time, about *forty days*. The Design of the *Odyssey* requir'd another Conduct; the Character of the Hero is *Prudence* and *Long-suffering*; therefore the Time of its Duration is much longer, above *eight Years*.

† The *Passions* of Tragedy are different from those of the Epic Poem. In the former, *Terror* and *Pity* have the chief place; the Passion that seems most peculiar to Epic Poetry, is *Admiration*.

Besides this *Admiration*, which in general distinguishes the Epic Poem from the Dramatic; each Epic Poem has likewise some *peculiar Passion*, which distinguishes it in particular from other Epic Poems, and constitutes a kind of singular and individual difference between these Poems of the same Species. These singular Passions correspond to the *Character* of the *Hero*. *Anger* and *Terror* reign throughout the *Iliad*, because *Achilles* is angry, and the most Terrible of all Men. The

* *The Time of the Action.*

† *The Passions of the Epic Poem.*

Æneid has all soft and tender Passions, because that is the Character of *Æneas*. The Prudence, Wisdom, and Constancy of *Ulysses* do not allow him either of these Extremes, therefore the Poet does not permit one of them to be predominant in the *Odyssey*. He confines himself to *Admiration* only, which he carries to an higher pitch than in the *Iliad*: And 'tis upon this account that he introduces a great many more Machines in the *Odyssey* into the Body of the Action, than are to be seen in the Actions of the other two Poems.

* The *Manners* of the Epic Poem ought to be poetically good, but it is not necessary they be always morally so. They are poetically good, when one may discover the Virtue or Vice, the good or ill Inclinations, of every one who speaks or acts: They are poetically bad, when Persons are made to speak or act out of Character, or inconsistently, or unequally. The *Manners* of *Æneas* and of *Mezentius* are equally good, considered poetically, because they equally demonstrate the Piety of the one, and the Impiety of the other.

† 'Tis requisite to make the same distinction between a Hero in Morality and a Hero in Poetry, as between moral and poetical Goodness. *Achilles* had as much right to the latter as *Æneas*. *Aristotle* says, that the Hero of a Poem should be neither good nor bad; neither advanc'd above the rest of mankind by his Virtues, or sunk beneath 'em by his Vices; that he may be the proper and fuller Example to others, both what to imitate and what to decline.

* The *Manners*.

† Character of the Hero.

The

The other Qualifications of the *Manners*, are, that they be *suitable* to the Causes which either raise or discover them in the Persons; that they have an exact *Resemblance* to what History or Fable have delivered of those persons to whom they are ascrib'd; and that there be an *Equality* in them, so that no man is made to act or speak out of his character.

* But this Equality is not sufficient for the *Unity of the Character*: 'tis further necessary that the same Spirit appear in all sort of Encounters. Thus *Æneas* acting with great *Piety* and *Mildness* in the first part of the *Æneid*, which requires no other Character; and afterwards appearing illustrious in Heroic valour in the wars of the second part, but there without any appearance either of a hard or a soft disposition, would doubtless be far from offending against the *Equality* of the *Manners*: But yet there would be no *Simplicity* or *Unity* in the Character. So that besides the Qualities that claim their particular place upon different occasions, there must be one appearing throughout, which commands over all the rest: And without this we may affirm 'tis no Character.

One may indeed make a Hero as valiant as *Achilles*, as pious as *Æneas*, and as prudent as *Ulysses*. But 'tis a meer Chimæra to imagine a Hero that has the Valour of *Achilles*, the Piety of *Æneas*, and the Prudence of *Ulysses*, at one and the same time. This Vision might happen to an

* *Unity of the Character.*

Author,

Author, who would suit the character of a Hero to whatever each part of the Action might naturally require, without regarding the Essence of the Fable, or the Unity of the Character in the same person upon all sorts of occasions: This Hero would be the mildest, best-natur'd Prince in the World, and also the most cholerick, hard-hearted, and implacable creature imaginable; he would be extremely tender like *Aeneas*, extremely violent like *Achilles*, and yet have the indifference of *Ulysses*, that is incapable of the two extremes. Would it not be in vain for the Poet to call this Person by the same name throughout?

Let us reflect on the effects it would produce in several Poems, whose Authors were of opinion, that the chief character of a Hero is that of an accomplish'd Man. They would be all alike, all valiant in Battle, prudent in Council, pious in the acts of Religion, courteous, civil, magnificent; and lastly endued with all the prodigious Virtues any Poet could invent. All this would be independent from the Action and the Subject of the Poem; and upon seeing each Hero separated from the rest of the work, we should not easily guess, to what Action and to what Poem the Hero belong'd? So that we should see that none of those would have a Character, since the Character is that which makes a person discernible, and which distinguishes him from all others.

This commanding Quality in *Achilles* is his Anger, in *Ulysses* the art of Dissimulation, in *Aeneas* Meekness. Each of these may be stil'd, by way of eminence, the Character in these Heroes.
But

But these Characters cannot be alone. 'Tis absolutely necessary that some other should give them a lustre, and embellish them as far as they are capable: Either by hiding the defects that are in each, by some noble and shining Qualities; as the Poet has done the Anger of *Achilles*, by shading it with an extraordinary Valour: Or by making them entirely of the nature of a true and solid Virtue, as is to be observ'd in the two others. The Diffimulation of *Ulysses* is a part of his Prudence; and the Meekness of *Aeneas* is wholly employ'd in submitting his Will to the Gods. For the making up this Union, our Poets have join'd together such Qualities as are by nature the most compatible; *Valour* with *Anger*, *Meekness* with *Piety*, and *Prudence* with *Diffimulation*. This last Union was necessary for the Goodness of *Ulysses*; for without that, his Diffimulation might have degenerated into Wickedness and Double-dealing.

S E C T. VII

* WE come now to the *Machines* of the Epic Poem. The chief Passion which it aims to excite being *Admiration*, nothing is so conducive to that as the *Marvellous*; and the importance and dignity of the Action is by nothing so greatly elevated as by the *Care and Interposition of Heaven*.

These Machines are of three sorts. Some are *Theological*, and were invented to explain the nature of God. Others are *Physical*, and represent

* *Of the Machinery.*

things

things of Nature. The last are *Moral*, and are the Images of Virtues and Vices.

Homer and the Antients have given to their Deities the Manners, Passions and Vices of Men. Their Poems are wholly Allegorical; and in this view it is easier to defend *Homer* than to blame him. We cannot accuse him for making mention of many Gods, for his bestowing Passions upon them, or even introducing them fighting against men. The Scripture uses the like figures and expressions.

If it be allowable to speak thus of the Gods in *Theology*, much more in the Fictions of *Natural Philosophy*, where, if a Poet describes the Deities, he must give them such Manners, Speeches, and Actions as are conformable to the nature of the things they represent under those Divinities. The case is the same in *Moral* Deities: *Minerva* is wise, because she represents Prudence; *Venus* is both good or bad, because the Passion of Love is capable of these contrary qualities.

Since among the Gods of a Poem some are good, some bad, and some indifferently either; and since of our Passions we make so many allegorical Deities; one may attribute to the Gods all that is done in the Poem, whether good or evil. But these Deities do not act constantly in one and the same manner.

Sometimes they act invisibly, and by meer Inspiration; which has nothing in it extraordinary or miraculous: being no more than what we say every day, "That some God has assisted us, or
" some Dæmon has instigated us.

At

At other times they appear visibly, and manifest themselves to men, in a manner altogether miraculous and præternatural.

The third way has something of both the others: It is in truth a miracle, but is not commonly so accounted: This includes *Dreams, Oracles, &c.*

All these ways must be *Probable*; for so necessary as the Marvellous is to the Epic Action, as nothing is so conducive to Admiration; yet we can on the other hand admire nothing that we think impossible. Tho' the Probability of these Machines be of a very large extent, (since 'tis founded upon Divine Power) it is not without limitations. There are numerous Instances of allowable and probable Machines in the Epic Poems, where the Gods are no less Actors than the Men. But the less credible sort, such as *Metamorphoses, &c.* are far more rare.

This suggests a Reflection on the Method of rendering those Machines probable, which in their own nature are hardly so. Those which require only *Divine Probability*, should be so disengag'd from the Action, that one might substract them from it without destroying the Action. But those which are essential and necessary, should be grounded upon *Human Probability*, and not on the sole Power of God. Thus the Episodes of *Circe, the Sirens, Polyphemus, &c.* are necessary to the Action of the *Odysssey*, and yet not humanly probable: Yet *Homer* has artificially reduc'd them to human Probability, by the Simplicity and Ignorance of the *Phæacians*, before whom he causes those recitals to be made.

The

The next Question is, Where, and on what occasions Machines may be used? It is certain *Homer* and *Virgil* make use of them every where, and scarce suffer any Action to be performed without them. *Petronius* makes this a Precept: *Per ambages, deorumque ministeria*, &c. The Gods are mention'd in the very Proposition of their Works, the Invocation is address to them, and the whole Narration is full of them. The Gods are the Causes of the Action, they form the Intrigue, and bring about the Solution. The precept of *Aristotle* and *Horace*, that the Unravelling of the Plot should not proceed from a Miracle or the appearance of a God, has place only in Dramatic Poetry, not in the Epic. For it is plain that both in the Solution of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* the Gods are concerned: In the former, the Deities meet to appease the Anger of *Achilles*: *Iris* and *Mercury* are sent to that purpose, and *Minerva* eminently assists *Achilles* in the decisive combat with *Hector*. In the *Odyssey*, the same Goddess fights close by *Ulysses* against the Suitors, and concludes that Peace betwixt him and the *Ithacensians*, which compleats the Poem.

We may therefore determine, that a Machine is not an Invention to extricate the Poet out of any difficulty which embarrasses him: But that the Presence of a Divinity, and some Action surprizing and extraordinary, are inserted into almost all the parts of his work, in order to render it more Majestick and more Admirable. But this mixture ought to be so made, that the

Machines might be retrench'd without taking any thing from the Action. At the same time it gives the Readers a lesson of Piety and Virtue; and teaches them, that the most brave and the most wise can do nothing, and attain nothing great and glorious, without the assistance of Heaven. Thus the Machinery crowns the whole work, and renders it at once, *Marvellous, Probable, and Moral.*



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*The Gods consult about Ulysses's
departure from Calypso .*

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THE
FIRST BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

Vol. I.





The A R G U M E N T.

Minerva's Descent to Ithaca.

The Poem opens within forty eight days of the arrival of Ulysses in his dominions. He had now remain'd seven years in the island of Calypso, when the Gods assembled in council proposed the method of his departure from thence, and his return to his native country. For this purpose it is concluded to send Mercury to Calypso, and Pallas immediately descends to Ithaca. She holds a conference with Telemachus, in the shape of Mentis King of the Taphians ; in which she advises him to take a journey in quest of his Father Ulysses, to Pylos and Sparta, where Nestor and Menelaus yet reign'd : then after having visibly display'd her divinity, disappears. The suitors of Penelope make great entertainments, and riot in her palace till night. Phemius sings to them the return of the Grecians, till Penelope puts a stop to the song. Some words arise between the suitors and Telemachus, who summons the council to meet the day following.

T H E



THE
FIRST BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

THE Man, for Wisdom's various arts renown'd,
Long exercis'd in woes, oh Muse! resound.
Who, when his arms had wrought the destin'd fall
Of sacred *Troy*, and raz'd her heav'n-built wall,
Wand'ring

NOTES.

We shall proceed in the same method thro' the course of these Annotations upon the *Odyssey*, as in those upon the *Iliad*; considering *Homer* chiefly as a Poet, endeavouring to make his beauties understood, and not to praise without a reason given. It is equally an extreme, on the one hand to think *Homer* has no human defects; and on the other to dwell so much upon those defects, as to depreciate his beauties. The greater part of Criticks form a general character, from the observation of particular errors,

4 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

5 Wand'ring from clime to clime, observant stray'd,
Their Manners noted, and their States survey'd.

On

rors, taken in their own oblique or imperfect views; which is as unjust, as to make a judgment of the beauty of a man's body from the shadow it happens to cast, in such or such a position. To convince the Reader of this intended impartiality, we readily allow the *Odyssey* to be inferior to the *Iliad* in many respects. It has not that sublimity of spirit, or that enthusiasm of poetry; but then it must be allow'd, if it be less noble, it is more instructive: The other abounds with more Heroism, this with more Morality. The *Iliad* gives us a draught of Gods and Heroes, of discord, of contentions, and scenes of slaughter; the *Odyssey* sets before us a scene more amiable, the landscapes of nature, the pleasures of private life, the duties of every station, the hospitality of ancient times; a less busy, but more agreeable portrait. The *Iliad* concludes with the ruin, the *Odyssey* with the happiness of a nation. Horace was of the same opinion, as is evident from the epistle to Lollius.

*Seditione, dolis, scelere, libidine, & ira,
Iliacos intra muros peccatur & extra.
Rursus, quid virtus & quid sapientia possit,
Utile proposuit nobis exemplar Ulysseni.*

v. 1. *The Man, for Wisdom, &c.*] Homer opens his Poem with the utmost simplicity and modesty; he continually grows upon the reader,

*Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem
Cogitat, ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat.*

Cicero lays this down as a rule for the Orator, *principia verecunda, non elatis intensa verbis*; and Horace for the Poet, *Nec sic incipies, &c.* He proposes the beginning of the *Odyssey* as a pattern for all future poems, and has translated them in his Art of poetry.

*Dic mihi, Musa, virum, capta post tempora Troja,
Quot mores hominum multorum vidit, & urbes.*

May I be forgiven the arrogance, if I should offer a criticism upon this translation? The sufferings of Ulysses are the subject of the whole *Odyssey*, and yet Horace has omitted the mention of those sufferings: *ὅς μάλ' ἀπολλὰν ἠνέχθη*. There is another word

Book I. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 5

On stormy seas unnumber'd toils he bore,
Safe with his friends to gain his natal shore;

Vain

word also which seems essential, that is, *πολύτροπος*, this is likewise omitted. For the sufferings of *Ulysses*, and the wisdom by which he extricated himself from them, enter into the very design of the Poem. But indeed in another place he has plainly had regard to all these circumstances,

*Qui domitor Trojæ, multorum providus urbes
Et mores hominum inspexit, latamque per aquor
Dum sibi, dum sociis, reditum parat, aspera multa
Pertulit* ————— *Epist. ad Lat.*

I must also refute a criticism of *Rapin*, who will have it that the word *πολύτροπος* includes a character of craft and low cunning, unworthy of a brave spirit: But *Eustathius* admirably vindicates the Poet in this respect, he shews us that *τρόπος* no where in *Homer* signifies (*ἦθη*) or Morals; and that it implies a man who could accommodate himself to every condition of life; one who in the worst estate had still a reserve to free himself from it; it therefore, says he, signifies a man that thro' experience has learn'd wisdom. I have likewise the authority of *Horace* for this sense, in the above-cited passage,

• *Qui domitor Trojæ, multorum providus urbes.*

I take *providus* in this place to signify not only a man who noted the manners of various nations with care, but also one who in calamity could foresee methods to extricate himself from it. And surely nothing can be more unjust than what *Rapin* objects against *Ulysses*, in employing his wisdom only in his own preservation, while all his companions were lost: *Homer* himself sufficiently refutes this objection, and directly tells us, that he employed his wisdom in the care of their safety, but that they thro' their folly defeated his wisdom. The words of *Homer*, says *Eustathius*, shew that a wise man neglects not his friends in adversity. But, says *Rapin*, what could oblige *Homer* to begin with so dishonourable an action, and place the greatest weakness of his Hero in the very frontispiece of his Poem? and invoke his Muse to sing the man who with difficulty saved himself, and suffer'd his companions to be destroy'd? There had been some weight in this objection, if *Ulysses* had saved his own, with the loss of their lives; but I cannot

6 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

Vain toils! their impious folly dar'd to prey

10 On Herds devoted to the God of Day;

The

not see any dishonour, in his preserving himself by wisdom, when they destroy'd themselves by folly: It was chiefly by storms that they perish'd; it can be no imputation to his character, not to be able to restrain the effects of a tempest: he did all that a wise man cou'd do, he gave them such admonitions upon every emergency, that if they had pursued them, they had been preserved as well as *Ulysses*.

v. 1. For *Wisdom's various arts renown'd.*] *Bossu's* observation in relation to this Epithet *πολύτροπος*, given to *Ulysses*, is worth transcribing. The Fable of the *Odyssey* (says he) is wholly for the conduct and policy of a State: Therefore the quality it requires is *Wisdom*, but this virtue is of too large an extent for the simplicity which a just and precise character requires; it is therefore requisite it should be limited. The great art of Kings is the mystery of *Diffimulation*. 'Tis well known, that *Lewis* the eleventh, for the instruction of his Son, reduc'd all the *Latin language* to these words only, viz. *Qui nescit dissimulare nescit regnare*. 'Twas likewise by this practice that *Saul* began his reign, when he was first elected and as yet full of the spirit of God. The first thing we read of him in holy Writ is, * that he made as if he did not hear the words which seditious people spoke against him.

* *Ille* read of him in holy Writ is, * that he made as if he did not hear the words which seditious people spoke against him.
verod-f
simula-
bat se
audire.
Reg.
lib. 1.
 This then is the character which the *Greek Poet* gives his *Ulysses* in the Proposition of his Poem, he calls him *ἄνδρα πολύτροπον*; to denote this prudent diffimulation, which disguised him so many ways, and put him upon taking so many shapes.

Without mentioning any thing of *Circe*, who detain'd him with her a whole year, and who was famous for the transformations she made of all sorts of persons; the reader finds him at first with *Calypso* the daughter of wise *Atlas*, who bore up the vast pillars that reach'd from Earth to Heaven, and whose knowledge penetrated into the depths of the unfathomable Ocean: that is to say, who was ignorant of nothing in Heaven, Earth, or Sea. And as the first product and principal part of so high, so solid, and so profound a knowledge was to know how to conceal one's self; this wise man call'd his daughter by a name that signified a † secret. The Poet makes his Hero, whom he designed for a Politician, to stay seven whole years with this Nymph. She taught him so well, that afterwards he lost no opportunity of putting her lessons in practice: for he does nothing without a disguise. At his parting from

† *Kα-*
λύπην.

Book I. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 7

The God vindictive doom'd them never more
(Ah men unblest'd !) to touch that natal shore.

Oh

from *Ogygia* he is cast upon the Isle of *Phaacia*: as kind as his reception was, yet he stays 'till the night before he went off e're he wou'd discover himself. From thence he goes to *Ithaca*: the first adventure that happen'd to him there was with *Minerva*, the most prudent among the Deities, as *Ulysses* was the most prudent among men. She says so expressly in that very passage. Nor did they fail to disguise themselves. *Minerva* takes upon her the shape of a shepherd, and *Ulysses* tells her he was oblig'd to fly from *Crete*, because he had murder'd the son of King *Idomeneus*. The Goddess discovers her self first, and commends him particularly, because these artifices were so easy and natural to him, that they seem'd to be born with him. Afterwards the Hero under the form of a beggar deceives first of all *Eumens*, then his son, and last of all his wife, and every body else, till he found an opportunity of punishing his Enemies, to whom he discover'd not himself 'till he kill'd them, namely on the last night. After his discovering himself in the Palace, he goes the next day to deceive his father, appearing at first under a borrow'd name; before he wou'd give him joy of his return. Thus he takes upon him all manner of shapes, and dissembles to the very last. But the Poet joins to this character a valour and a constancy which render him invincible in the most daring and desperate adventures.

v. 3. *Who, when his arms had wrought the destin'd fall
Of sacred Troy*——

Whence is it that *Ulysses* is said to have overthrown *Troy*? and not *Achilles*, who was of more remarkable courage than *Ulysses*? *Eustathius* tells us, that the destruction of *Troy* ought to be ascribed chiefly to *Ulysses*, as he not only took away the *Palladium*, but was the inventor of the stratagem of the wooden horse, by which that city was conquer'd. *Virgil* in his second book of the *Æneis* gives a noble description of its destruction, by which we find that *Ulysses* was not only the contriver of its ruin, but bore a great share in the actions of the night in which that City was overturn'd.

v. 9. *Vain toils ! their impious folly, &c.*] By this single trait, *Homer* marks an essential difference between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*: namely, that in the former Poem the people perish'd by the folly of their Kings :

8 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

Oh snatch some portion of these acts from fate,
Celestial Muse! and to our world relate.

15 Now at their native realms the Greeks arriv'd;
All who the Wars of ten long years surviv'd,

And

Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.

In this, the people perish by their own folly, while their Prince omits nothing to procure their felicity. A plain reason why the *Odyssey* is more calculated for the People, than the *Iliad*. Dacier.

v. 13. *Oh snatch some portion of these acts from fate.*] It may be ask'd why the Poet invokes the Muse to recount only Part of the sufferings of *Ulysses*? and why those words, *To Us also*, are inserted? To the first it may be answer'd, that an heroic Poem dwells chiefly upon incidents of importance, and passes over every thing that does not contribute to raise our idea of the Hero, or to the main design of the Poem: To the other *Boissacius* answers several ways; either, says he, the word *xai* is to be taken as an expletive, as it is in a thousand places in *Homer*; or it means that this is a subject so considerable, that it will be a theme to many Poets: or that being a true History it had spread over many nations of the world, and that *Homer* himself received the story of the Poem from *Egypt*; and then the meaning will be, "Sing, oh Muse, to the *Greeks* as well as to other nations, the sufferings of *Ulysses*." I should prefer the first as being the most natural: the rest seem forced, and consequently improper for the opening of a Poem, where the utmost plainness is necessary; especially, if we consider that *Ulysses* was a *Grecian*, and it is not probable that the *Grecians* should be the least acquainted with the story, or the latest to celebrate the actions, of a *Grecian*.

v. 15. *Now at their native realms the Greeks arriv'd.*] It is necessary for the better understanding of the Poem, to fix the period of Time from which it takes its beginning: *Homer*, as *Boissacius* observes, does not begin with the wanderings of *Ulysses*, he steps at once into the latter end of his actions, and leaves the preceding story to be told by way of narration. Thus in his *Iliad*, he dates his Poem from the anger of *Achilles*, which happen'd almost at the conclusion of the *Trojan* war. From hence *Horace* drew his observation in his *Arte Poet*.

Scmper

Book I. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 9

And 'scap'd the perils of the gulfy Main,

Ulysses, sole of all the victor train,

An exile from his dear paternal coast,

20 Deplor'd his absent Queen, and Empire lost,

Calypso in her caves constrain'd his stay,

With sweet, reluctant, amorous delay :

In vain——for now the circling years disclose

The day predestin'd to reward his woes.

25 At length his *Ithaca* is giv'n by Fate,

Where yet new labours his arrival wait ;

*Semper ad eventum festinat ; & in medias res,
Non secus ac notas, auditorem rapit.*

There are but forty eight days from the departure of *Ulysses* from *Calypso*, to his discovery in *Ithaca* ; he had been one year with *Circe*, and seven with *Calypso*, when the Gods dispatched *Mercury* to that Goddess ; from which point of Time we are to date the *Odyssey*.

This observation gives a reason why the Poet invokes the Muse to recount the wanderings of this Hero in part only ; for *Ulysses*, as appears from the beginning of the ninth book, after he left the shores of *Troy*, was driven to *Ismarus* of the *Ciconians*. An Historian must have begun from the fall of *Troy*, and related his wanderings with truth and order ; for History is chiefly for instruction : But a Poet takes another method, and disposes every circumstance arbitrarily ; he chuses or rejects, as suits best with his principal design, and in such a manner as to give at once delight and instruction.

v. 21. *Calypso in her Cave constrain'd his stay.*] To the Remark before cited of *Bossu*, upon the abode of *Ulysses* with *Calypso*, may be added this of the Abbé *Fraguier* : that his residing seven years in the caves of *Calypso*, (the Goddess of Secrecy) may only mean that he remain'd so long hid from the knowledge and enquiry of all men ; or that whatever befel him in all that time was lost to History, or made no part in the Poem.

10 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

At length their rage the hostile Pow'rs restrain,

All but the ruthless Monarch of the Main.

But now the God, remote, a heav'nly guest

30 In *Æthiopia* grac'd the genial feast,

(A race divided, whom with sloping rays

The rising and descending Sun furveys)

There on the world's extreamest verge rever'd,

With Hecatombs and pray'r in pomp prefer'd,

v. 28. *All but the ruthless Monarch of the Main.*] It may be ask'd why *Neptune* is thus enraged against *Ulysses*? *Homer* himself tells us, it was because that *Hero* had put out the eye of his son *Cyclops*. But if we take *Neptune* by way of Allegory for the Ocean, the passage implies, that the sufferings of *Ulysses* were chiefly by sea; and therefore Poetry, which adds a grandeur to the meanest circumstance, introduces the God of it as his greatest enemy. *Eaststathius*.

v. 30. *In Æthiopia, &c.*] *Strabo* in his first book delivers his opinion, that "the ancient *Grecians* included all those people who "lived upon the southern Ocean, from east to west, in the general name of *Æthiopians*, and that it was not confined to those "only who lay south of *Egypt*." *Ptolemy* says, that "under the "Zodiac, from east to west, inhabit the *Æthiopians*, black of colour." And elsewhere the same Geographer divides *Æthiopia* into the eastern and the western. These eastern and western *Æthiopians* were separated by the *Arabian* or *Egyptian* Gulf; which tho' never mention'd by *Homer*, as *Aristarchus* remark'd, yet it is not probable (says *Strabo*) that he should be ignorant of it, it being but a thousand stadia distant from the *Mediterranean*, when he knew the *Egyptian Thebes*, which was four times as far off.

Strab. Plin. Spontan.

I will not repeat what was observ'd upon the Gods being gone to the *Æthiopians*, in the first book of the *Iliad*; 'tis sufficient in general to observe, that the *Æthiopians* were a people very religious towards the Gods, and that they held a pompous feast twelve days annually to their honour; and in particular, that the Poet very judiciously makes use of this solemnity to remove *Neptune* out of the way, who was the enemy of *Ulysses*, that he may with the greater security bring off his *Hero* from *Calypso's* Island. *Eaststathius*.

Distant

- 35 Distant he lay : while in the bright abodes
Of high *Olympus*, *Jove* conven'd the Gods ;
Th'assembly thus the Sire supreme address ;
Ægythus' fate revolving in his breast,
Whom young *Orestes* to the dreary coast
40 Of *Pluto* sent, a blood-polluted Ghost.
Perverse Mankind ! whose Wills, created free,
Charge all their woes on absolute Decree ;
All to the dooming Gods their guilt translate,
And Follies are miscall'd the crimes of Fate.
45 When to his lust *Ægythus* gave the rein,
Did Fate, or we, th'adult'rous act constrain ?

Did

v. 45. *Ægythus*.] It is difficult to find a reason why, in the original, *Jupiter* shou'd give such an honourable appellation to *Ægythus*, as ἀμώβητος, unblameable, who had dishonoured the bed of *Agamemnon*, and taken his life away ; especially in that very instant when he condemns the fact with so great solemnity : *Estathius* says, that *Homer*, an enemy to censure and invective, introduces that God as having respect only to his good qualities, and commending him for his general character ; and adds that it had been an indecency in the Poet to have given countenance to that base custom by the authority of *Jupiter*. *Dacier* is not satisfy'd with this reason, and tells us, that *Homer* gives *Ægythus* this title, to vindicate *Jupiter* from the imputation of his crimes : He gives us to understand that Heaven is not the cause of man's failings ; that he is by Creation able to act virtuously, and that it is thro' his own misconduct that he deviates into evil ; and therefore the meaning is this ; "*Jupiter* calling to mind *Ægythus*, that *Ægythus*—thus whom he had created wise and virtuous, and made capable to sustain that character." And this agrees admirably with the beginning of the speech of *Jupiter*, who there vindicates his own Divinity.

12 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

Did Fate, or we, when great *Atrides* dy'd,

Urge the bold traitor to the Regicide?

Hermes I sent, while yet his soul remain'd

50 Sincere from royal blood, and faith profan'd ;

To

But if this shou'd seem too refin'd, it may be sufficient to take the word in that good sense which *Aegythus* might have deserved for many good qualities : Thus *Achilles* is call'd the *swift of foot*, even while he stands, or sleeps ; the first being his general character. It may be further confirm'd by a passage something resembling it in the holy Scriptures : The *Egyptian* Midwives were guilty of a lye to *Pharaoh*, and yet God pardons it, and blesses them : He blesses them not because they lyed, but because they preserv'd the children of the *Israelites*.

v. 41. *Jupiter's speech.*] The solemnity and sententiousness of this speech is taken notice of by *Emstatius* ; and surely Poetry must be highly valuable, when it delivers such excellent instructions. It contain'd the whole of religion amongst the antients ; and made Philosophy more agreeable. This passage is an instance of it, a passage worthy of a Christian ; it shews us that the Supreme Being is sovereignly good ; that he rewards the just, and punishes the unjust ; and that the folly of man, and not the decree of Heaven, is the cause of human calamity.

iv. 49. *Hermes I sent, &c.*] It would be endless to observe every moral passage in the *Odyssey*, the whole of it being but one lesson of Morality. But surely it must be a pleasure to the Reader to learn what notions the antients had of a Deity, from the oldest book extant, except the book of *Moses*.

Jupiter here declares that he never fails to warn mankind from evil, and that he had sent by *Mercury* for this purpose to *Aegythus*. It may be ask'd what is this *Mercury* whom *Jupiter* sends ? It is the light of Nature, which Heaven implants in the breast of every man : and which, as *Cicero* says, is not only more ancient than the world, but co-eval with the Master of the world himself. He writes to this effect. *There was from the beginning such a thing as Reason, a direct emanation from Nature it self, which prompted to good, and averted from evil. A Reason which did not then become a law, when it was first reduced to writing, but was so even from the moment it existed, and it existed from ever, of an equal date with the divine Intelligence: It is the true and primordial Law, pro-*

+

per

Book I. *HOMER'S ODYSSEY.* 13

To warn the wretch, that young *Orestes* grown
To manly years shou'd re-assert the throne.

Yet impotent of mind, and uncontrol'd,
He plung'd into the gulf which Heav'n foretold.

55 Here paus'd the God, and pensivè thus replies

Minerva graceful with her azure eyes.

O thou! from whom the whole creation springs,

The source of pow'r on earth deriv'd to Kings!

His death was equal to the direful deed;

60 So may the Man of blood be doom'd to bleed!

per to command and to forbid, it is the Reason of the great Jupiter.

That Reason of the supreme Being, is here call'd *Mercury*; that Reason flowing from God, which is constantly dictating to the most corrupted hearts, *this is good, or, this is evil.* Hence arose an ancient Proverb, recorded by *Simplicius*, *Reason is a Mercury to all men.* *Epictetus* [lib. 3. *Arrian.*] says, *Apollo knew that Laius would not obey his Oracle. Apollo nevertheless did not neglect to prophecy to Laius those evils that threaten'd him. The goodness of the Divinity never fails to advertise mankind; that source of truth is ever open and free: but men are ever incredulous, disobedient and rebellious.* *Dacier.*

v. 57. *Minerva's Speech.*] It may be ask'd what relation *Ulysses* has to *Aegisthus*, that the mention of the one should immediately give occasion for the remembrance of the other? and it may appear unnatural in the Poet to give rise to his Poem by so unexpected a transition from *Aegisthus* to *Ulysses*. *Eustathius* vindicates *Homer*, by shewing that it is not only beautiful but natural, to take rise from what offers it self to our immediate observation. What can be more natural, when *Jupiter* is relating how he punishes the wicked, than for Wisdom or *Minerva* to suggest, that the good ought to be rewarded? There is no forced introduction; no artful preparation, but the whole arises from the occasion, which is a great beauty. *Eustathius.*

But

14 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

But grief and rage alternate wound my breast

For brave *Ulysses*, still by fate oppress'd.

Amidst an Isle, around whose rocky shore

The forests murmur, and the furies roar,

65 The blameless hero from his wish'd-for home

A Goddess guards in her enchanted dome.

(*Atlas* her fire, to whose far-piercing eye

The wonders of the Deep expanded lye ;

Th'eternal

v. 63. *Amidst an Isle, &c.*] There was, according to true History, such an Island of *Calyss*, of which *Strabo* writes ; that *Solon* gives an account of the Island *Atlantis* bordering upon *Egypt*, and that he went thither to make enquiry, and learn'd that an Island was once there, but by time was vanished. *Eustathius*.

v. 67. *Atlas her fire, to whose far-piercing eye
The wonders of the Deep expanded lie ;
Th'eternal columns which on earth he rears
End in the starry vault, and prop the Spheres.*]

Atlas is here said to understand all the depths of the Sea : but the Epithet *ολοόρωνος* apply'd to him, has two different significations. It implies either, *one whose thoughts are full of terrible and dismal things*, or, *one who has infinite knowledge and unbounded views*, and 'tis doubtful which of them *Homer* means. To reconcile both, may we not think our Author had heard something of the ancient tradition which makes *Atlas* the same person with *Enoch*, and represents him as a great Astronomer, who prophecy'd of the universal deluge, and exhorted mankind to repentance ? Therefore he nam'd his son *Methuselah*, to shew that after his death the waters shou'd overspread the face of the earth. His continual lamentations on this occasion caus'd him to be call'd the *Weeper* ; for the world is always an enemy to melancholy predictions. Thus *Homer* upon the credit of this Tradition might very well call *Atlas*, *one whose thoughts ran upon dismal things*, or *one whose views and cares were vastly extended*.

I insist no otherwise upon this but as a conjecture, yet it is further strengthen'd by what follows in the next lines : *That Atlas sustains those Columns which being fixed upon the earth supports the Heavens*,

Book I. *HOMER's ODYSSEY.* 15

Th'eternal columns which on earth he rears

70 End in the starry vault, and prop the spheres.)

By his fair daughter is the chief confin'd,

Who sooths to dear delight his anxious mind:

Successless all her soft caresses prove;

To banish from his breast his Country's love;

75 To see the smoke from his lov'd palace rise,

While the dear isle in distant prospect lyes,

With what contentment could he close his eyes?

And

Heavens. This is generally interpreted of his great skill in Astronomy and Geography. But may not the reason be more particular? Since *Atlas* or *Enoch* had prophecy'd of the Deluge, and since that prediction was looked upon as the effect of his skill in Astronomy; might it not be said he knew the abysses of the Sea, and sustain'd the pillars of Heaven, to express that he knew how the fountains of the deep and the waters above the Heavens shou'd unite to drown the earth?

As to the image of the *pillars of Heaven*, it is frequent in the sacred books, and used to express the height of vast mountains. (*Pindar* calls *Ætna* the *σπείων κίονα*;) and there might probably be something more particular that furnished *Homer* with this idea; I mean the pillars of *Hercules*, well-known in his time, and neighbouring to the mountain he describes. *Dacier*.

See the description of this mountain in the 4th book of *Virgil*, where the same image is preserv'd without any hint of allegory: As indeed it is no more than a poetical manner of expressing the great height and extensive prospect of the mountain.

v. 75. To see the smoke from his lov'd Palace rise.] There is an agreeable tenderness in this Image, and nothing can better paint the ardent desire a man naturally has to review his native country after a long absence. This is still stronger than that which *Cicero* extols in several places of his works, that *Ulysses* preferr'd the sight of *Ithaca* to the Immortality proffer'd him by *Calypso*. He here desires to purchase, at the price of his life, the pleasure, not of

16 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

And will Omnipotence neglect to save
The suffering virtue of the wise and brave ?

80 Must he, whose altars on the *Phrygian* shore
With frequent rites, and pure, avow'd thy pow'r,
Be doom'd the worst of human ills to prove,
Unblest'd, abandon'd to the wrath of *Jove* ?

— Daughter! what words have pass'd thy lips unweigh'd?
85 (Reply'd the Thund'rer to the Martial Maid)
Deem not unjustly by my doom oppress'd
Of human race the wisest, and the best.

of returning to his country, but even of seeing at a distance the very smoke of it. *Dacier*.

There are some things dispers'd in this speech of *Pallas*, which I shall lay together ; as that *Minerva* makes it an aggravation to the calamity of *Ulysses*, to be detain'd by a Goddess that loves him ; that he is enclosed in an Island ; and she adds, round which the Seas flow ; as if that was not common to all Islands ; but these expressions are used to shew the impossibility of the escape of *Ulysses*, without the interposition of *Jupiter*.

In the conclusion she observes, that *Ulysses* never neglected to sacrifice before *Troy* ; this is said to shew the great piety of *Ulysses*, who not only paid his sacrifices in *Ithaca*, where he abounded in riches, but amongst strangers in an enemy's country, where there might be a scarcity of offerings. *Euſtathius*.

v. 84. Daughter! what words, &c.] This verse is frequently repeated both in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* ; it has here a particular energy. *Jupiter* reproves *Minerva* for supposing he could ever be unmindful of an Hero so pious as *Ulysses*. It is spoken with vehemence ; an instance, says *Euſtathius*, that it is not only equitable, but an attribute of Divinity, for rulers to remember those who serve them faithfully.

Neptune,

Book I. *HOMER's ODYSSEY.* 17

- Neptune*, by pray'r repentant rarely won,
 Afflicts the chief, t'avenge his Giant-son,
 90 Whose visual orb *Ulysses* robb'd of light ;
 Great *Polypheme*, of more than mortal might !
 Him young *Thoësa* bore, (the bright increase
 Of *Phorcys*, dreaded in the sounds and seas :)
 Whom *Neptune* ey'd with bloom of beauty blest,
 95 And in his cave the yielding nymph compress'd.
 For this, the god constrains the *Greek* to roam,
 A hopeless exile from his native home,
 From death alone exempt——but cease to mourn ;
 Let all combine t'atchieve his wish'd return :
 100 *Neptune* aton'd, his wrath shall now refrain,
 Or thwart the synod of the gods in vain.
 Father and King ador'd ! *Minerva* cry'd,
 Since all who in th'*Olympian* bow'r reside
 Now make the wand'ring *Greek* their public care,
 105 Let *Hermes* to th' **Atlantic* isle repair ;

* *Ogygia*.

v. 89. *T'avenge his Giant-son.*] It is artful in the Poet to tell the Reader the occasion of the sufferings of *Ulysses* in the opening of the Poem; 'tis a justice due to his character, to shew that his misfortunes are not the consequence of his crimes, but the effect of *Neptune's* anger.

It is observable, that *Homer* does not stop to explain how *Ulysses* put out the eye of the *Cyclops* ; he hastens forward into the middle of his Poem, and leaves that for the future narration of *Ulysses*.

Bid

18 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

Bid him, arriv'd in bright *Calypho's* court,
 The Sanction of th'assembled pow'rs report :
 That wife *Ulysses* to his native land
 Must speed, obedient to their high command.

110 Mean time *Telemachus*, the blooming heir
 Of sea-girt *Ithaca*, demands my care :

'Tis

V. 110. Mean time *Telemachus*——demands my care, &c.] *Rapin* has rais'd several objections against this piece of conduct in *Homer* : He tells us that the action of the *Odyssey* is imperfect, that it begins with the voyages of *Telemachus*, and ends with those of *Ulysses* : That the four first books are all concerning *Telemachus* : That his voyage bears no proportion to that of *Ulysses*, that it contributes nothing to his return, which is brought about by *Jupiter*, and the assistance of the *Phæacians* ; that this gave occasion to *Beni* in his *academical discourses* to assert, that the Fable of the *Odyssey* is double, that the four first books of it are neither Episode, nor part of an action, nor have any connexion with the rest of the work.

I am of opinion, that these objections are made with too great severity ; The destruction of the Suitors is the chief hinge upon which the Poem turns, as it contributes chiefly to the re-establishment of *Ulysses* in his country and regality ; and whatever contributes to this end, contributes to the principal action, and is of a piece with the rest of the Poem ; and that this voyage does so is evident, in that it gives a defeat to the Suitors, and controuls their insolence ; it preserves *Ulysses's* throne and bed inviolate, in that it gives *Telemachus* courage to resist their attempts : It sets his character in a fair point of light, who is the second personage of the Poem, and is to have a great share in the future actions of it.

Enstathius judiciously observes, that *Homer* here prepares the way for the defeat of the Suitors, the chief design of his Poem ; and lays the ground-work of probability on which he intends to build his Poem, and reconcile it to the rules of credibility.

If it be ask'd for what end this voyage of *Telemachus* is made ; the answer is, to enquire after *Ulysses* : So that whatever Episodes are interwoven, *Ulysses* is still in view ; and whatever *Telemachus* acts, is undertaken solely upon his account ; and consequently, whatever is acted, contributes to the principal design, the restoration

'Tis mine, to form his green, unpractis'd years,
In sage debates, surrounded with his Peers,
To save the state ; and timely to restrain

115 The bold intrusion of the Suitor-train ;
Who crowd his palace, and with lawless pow'r
His herds and flocks in feastful rites devour.
To distant *Sparta*, and the spacious waste
Of sandy *Pyle*, the royal Youth shall haste.

There,

tion of *Ulysses*. So that the Fable is entire, and the Action not double.

'Tis to be remember'd also, that the sufferings of *Ulysses* are the subject of the Poem ; his personal calamities are not only intended, but his domestic misfortunes ; and by this conduct *Homer* shews us the extent of his misfortunes : His Queen is attempted, his Throne threaten'd, and his Wealth consumed in riot ; *Ulysses* suffers in *Telemachus*, and in every circumstance of life is unhappy.

v. 118. To distant *Sparta*, and the spacious waste
Of sandy *Pyle*—————]

Rapin is very severe upon this conduct. When *Telemachus*, says he, is to search for his father in the Courts of Greece, he cannot make the least progress without *Minerva* ; 'tis she who inspires his thoughts, and assists in the execution: Could not honour, duty, or nature, have moved his heart toward an absent father? The Machine, adds he, has not the least appearance of probability, inasmuch as the Goddess conducts him to every place, except only where *Ulysses* resides ; of which she ought by no means to be ignorant, upon the account of her Divinity.

But surely nothing can be more natural, than for a son, in order to gain intelligence of an absent father, to enquire in those places, and of those persons, where and from whom he is most likely to have information. Such is the conduct of *Telemachus* : And Poetry, which delights in the Wonderful, because this conduct agrees with wisdom, ascribes it to *Minerva* the Goddess of it. No doubt but *Minerva* knew where *Ulysses* resided ; but men must act as men : such an immediate interposition as *Rapin* requires, had stopp'd at once the fountain of the Poet's invention. If what

a Poet.

20 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

120 There, warm with filial love, the cause enquire
That from his realm retards his god-like Sire ;
Deliv'ring early to the voice of Fame
The promise of a great, immortal name.

She said: the sandals of celestial mold

125 Fledg'd with Ambrosial plumes, and rich with gold,
Surround her feet; with these sublime she sails
Th'aerial space, and mounts the winged gales :
O'er earth and ocean wide prepar'd to soar,
Her dreaded arm a beamy jav'lin bore,

130 Pond'rous and vast; which when her fury burns,
Proud Tyrants humbles, and whole hosts o'erturns.
From high *Olympus* prone her flight she bends,
And in the realm of *Ithaca* descends.
Her lineaments divine the grave disguise

135 Of *Mentes*' form conceal'd from human eyes :

a Poet invents be natural, it is justifiable ; and he may give the rein to his imagination, if he restrain it from running into extravagance and wildness.

V. 112. 'Tis mine, to form his green, unpractis'd years, &c.] In this the Poet draws the out-lines of what he is to fill up in the four subsequent books: and nothing can give us a greater idea of his unbounded invention, than his building upon so plain a foundation such a noble superstructure: He entertains us with variety of Episodes, historical relations, and manners of those ancient times. It must be confess'd, that the Characters in the *Odyssey*, and the number of the chief Actors, are but few; and yet the Poet never tires, he varies and diversifies the story so happily, that he is continually opening new scenes to engage our attention. He resembles his own *Proteus*, he is capable of all shapes, yet in all shapes the same Deity.

(*Mentes*,

Book I. *HOMER'S ODYSSEY.* 21

(*Mentes*, the Monarch of the *Taphian* land)

A glittering spear wav'd awful in her hand.

There in the portal plac'd, the heav'n-born maid

Enormous riot and mis-rule survey'd.

40 On hides of Beeves, before the palace gate,

(Sad spoils of luxury) the Suitors fate.

v. 136. *Mentes, the Monarch of the Taphian Land.*] We are told by tradition, that *Homer* was so sensible of friendship, that so do honour to his particular friends, he immortalized their names in his Poems. In the *Iliad* he has shewn his gratitude to *Tychius*; and in the *Odyssey*, to *Mentes*, *Phemius*, and *Mentor*. This *Mentes* was a famous Merchant of the isle of *Leucade*, who received *Homer* at *Smyrna*, and made him his companion in all his voyages. It is to this *Mentes* we owe the two Poems of *Homer*, for the Poet in all probability had never wrote them without those lights and informations he receiv'd, and the discoveries he was enabled to make, by those travels. *Homer* is not contented to give his name to the King of the *Taphians*, but feigns also that the Goddess of Wisdom chose to appear in his shape, preferably to that of all the Kings who were nearer neighbours to *Ithaca*. *Engelstius* thinks there might have been a real King of *Taphos* of this name, who was a friend to *Ulysses*. This may possibly be; but I would chuse to adhere rather to the old tradition, as it does honour to friendship. *Dacier*.

v. 139. *Enormous riot and mis-rule.*] This is the first appearance of the Suitors; and the Poet has drawn their pictures in such colours, as are agreeable to their characters thro' the whole Poem. They are; as *Horace* expresses it,

—————*Fruges consumere nati,*
Sponsi Penelope, Nebulones—————

The Poet gives a fine contrast between them and *Telemachus*; he entertains himself with his own thoughts, weighs the sum of things, and beholds with a virtuous sorrow the disorders of the Suitors: He appears, (like *Ulysses* among his transform'd companions in the tenth book,) a wise man, among brutes.

With

22. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

With rival art, and ardor in their mien,
 At Chess they vie, to captivate the Queen,
 Divining of their loves. Attending night,
 145 A menial train the flowing bowl supply:
 Others apart, the spacious hall prepare,
 And form the costly feast with busy care.
 There young *Telemachus*, his bloomy face
 Glowing celestial-sweet with godlike grace,
 150 Amid the Circle shines: but hope and fear
 (Painful vicissitude!) his bosom tear.
 Now, imag'd in his mind, he sees restor'd
 In peace and joy, the people's rightful Lord;
 The proud Oppressors fly the vengeful sword.

v. 145. *At Chess they vie, to captivate the Queen,
 Divining of their loves—*]

There are great disputes what this Game was, at which the Suitors play'd. *Athenæus* relates it from *Apian* the Grammarian, who had it from *Cteson* a native of *Ithaca*, that the sport was in this manner. The number of the Suitors being 108, they equally divided their men, or balls; that is to say, 54 on each side; these were placed on the board opposite to each other. Between the two sides was a vacant space, in the midst of which was the main mark, or *Queen*, the point which all were to aim at. They took their turns by lot; he who took or displac'd that mark, got his own in its place; and if by a second man, he again took it, without touching any of the others, he won the game; and it pass'd as an omen of obtaining his mistress. This principal mark, or *Queen*, was called by whatever name the Gamesters pleas'd; and the Suitors gave it the name of *Penelope*.

'Tis said, this Game was invented by *Palamedes* during the siege of *Troy*. [*Sophocles in Palam.*] *Enstath. Spondan. Dacier.*

While

Book I. *HOMER'S ODYSSEY.* 23

- 155 While his fond soul these fancied triumphs swell'd,
The stranger Guest the royal Youth behold.
Griev'd that a Visitant so long shou'd wait
Unmark'd, unhonour'd, at a Monarch's gate,
Instant he flew with hospitable haste,
160 And the new friend with courteous air embrac'd,
Stranger ! whoso'er thou art, securely rest
Affianc'd in my faith, a friendly guest:
Approach the dome, the social banquet share,
And then the purpose of thy soul declare.
165 Thus affable and mild, the Prince precedes,
And to the dome th'unknown Cæstrial leads.
The spear receiving from her hand, he plac'd
Against a column, fair with sculpture grac'd;
Where seemly rang'd in peaceful order stood
170 *Ulysses'* Arms, now long disus'd to blood.
He led the Goddess to the sovereign seat,
Her feet supported with a stool of state ;

v. 157. *Griev'd that a Visitant so long should wait.*] The Reader will lose much of the pleasure of this Poem, if he reads it without the reflection, that he peruses one of the most ancient books in the world ; it sets before him persons, places, and actions that existed three thousand years ago: Here we have an instance of the humanity of those early ages : *Telemachus*, pays a reverence to this stranger, only because he is a stranger : He attends him in person, and welcomes him with all the openness of ancient hospitality.

(A pur-

24 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

(A purple carpet spread the pavement wide)

Then drew his seat, familiar, to her side :

175 Far from the Suitor-train, a brutal crowd,

With insolence, and wine, elate and loud ;

Where the free guest, unnoted, might relate,

If haply conscious, of his Father's fate.

The golden ew'r a maid obsequious brings,

180 Replenish'd from the cool, translucent springs ;

With copious water the bright vase supplies

A silver Laver, of capacious size :

They wash. The tables in fair order spread,

They heap the glitt'ring Canisters with bread :

185 Viands of various kinds allure the taste,

Of choicest fort and flavour, rich repast !

v. 185, &c. *The Feast describ'd.*] There is nothing that has drawn more ridicule upon *Homer*, than the frequent descriptions of his entertainments : It has been judged, that he was more than ordinarily delighted with them, since he omits no opportunity to describe them ; nay, his temperance has not been unsuspected, according to that verse of *Horace*,

Laudibus arguitur vini vinosus Homerus.

But we must not condemn, without stronger evidence : a man may commend a sumptuous entertainment, or good wines, without being either a drunkard or a glutton. But since there are so many entertainments describ'd in the Poem, it may not be improper to give this some explanation.

They wash before the feast ; perhaps, says *Enstathius*, because they always at the feast made libations to the Gods. The Ewer was of gold, the vessel from whence the water was pour'd of silver, and the cups out of which they drank, were of gold.

Delicious

Delicious wines th'attending herald brought ;
 The gold gave lustre to the purple draught.
 Lur'd with the vapour of the fragrant feast,
 90 In rush'd the Suitors with voracious haste :
 Marshal'd in order due, to each a Sew'r
 Presents, to bathe his hands, a radiant ew'r.
 Luxurious then they feast. Observant round
 Gay, stripling youths the brimming goblets crown'd.
 95 The rage of hunger quell'd, they all advance,
 And form to measur'd airs the mazy dance:
 To *Phemius* was consign'd the chorded Lyre,
 Whose hand reluctant touch'd the warbling wire :

Phemius,

A damsel attends *Mentes*, but heralds wait upon the Suitors : *Eustathius* observes a decency in this conduct ; the Suitors were lewd debauchees, and consequently a woman of modesty would have been an improper attendant upon such a company. Beautiful Youths attended the company in quality of cup-bearers.

A Matron who has charge of the household (*ταμην*) brings in the bread and the cold meats, for so *Eustathius* interprets *ὑδάτια* ; an Officer, whose employ it was to portion out the victuals, brings in the meats that furnish'd out the rest of the entertainment ; and after the feast, a Bard diverts them with vocal and instrumental music.

Dacier is in great pain about the cold victuals ; she is afraid lest the Reader should think them the leavings of a former day : and tells us they might possibly be in the nature of our cold Tongues, Jambons, &c. But I think such fears to be groundless : We must have reference to the customs of those early ages ; and if it was customary for cold meats to be serv'd up, (neither is it necessary to suppose them the leavings of the former entertainment) it can be no disgrace to the hospitality of *Telemachus*.

v. 197. To *Phemius* was consign'd the chorded Lyre.] In ancient times, Princes entertain'd in their families certain learned and
 VOL. I. C wife

26 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

Phemius, whose voice divine cou'd sweetest sing

200 High strains, responsive to the vocal string.

Mean while, in whispers to his heav'nly guest
His indignation thus the Prince exprest.

Indulge my rising grief, whilst these (my friend)
With song and dance the pompous revel end.

205 Light is the dance, and doubly sweet the lays,

When, for the dear delight, another pays.

His treasur'd stores these Cormorants consume,

Whose bones, defrauded of a regal tomb

And common turf, lie naked on the plain,

210 Or doom'd to welter in the whelming main.

Shou'd he return, that troop so blithe and bold,

With purple robes inwrought, and stiff with gold,

Precipitant in fear, wou'd wing their flight,

And curse their cumbrous pride's unwieldy weight.

wife men, who were both Poets and Philosophers, and not only made it their business to amuse and delight, but to promote wisdom and morality. *Ulysses*, at his departure for *Troy*, left one of these with *Penelope*: and it was usual to consign, in this manner, the care of their wives and families to the Poets of those days, as appears from a signal passage in the third book, verse (of the original) 267, &c. To this man *Homer* gives the name of *Phemius*; to celebrate one of his friends, who was so call'd, and who had been his Preceptor (says *Eusebius*.) I must add one remark, that tho' he places his Master here in no very good company, yet he guards his character from any imputation, by telling us, that he attended the Suitors by compulsion. This is not only a great instance of his gratitude, but also of his tenderness and delicacy.

But

- 215 But ah I dream!——th' appointed hour is fled,
 And Hope, too long with vain delusion fed,
 Deaf to the rumour of fallacious fame,
 Gives to the roll of death his glorious name! A.
 With venial freedom let me now demand
- 220 Thy name, thy lineage, and paternal land:
 Sincere, from whence began thy course, recite;
 And to what ship I owe the friendly freight?
 Now first to me this visit dost thou daign,
 Or number'd in my Father's social train ?
- 225 All who deserv'd his choice, he made his own,
 And curious much to know, he far was known.
 My birth I boast (the blue-ey'd Virgin cries)
 From great *Anchialus*, renown'd and wise:
Mentes my name; I rule the *Taphian* race,
- 230 Whose bounds the deep circumfluent waves embrace;
 A duteous people, and industrious Isle,
 To naval arts inur'd, and stormy toil.

v. 225. *All who deserv'd his choice———*] 'Tis evident, from this and many places in the *Iliad*, that Hospitality was hereditary; an happiness and honour peculiar to these heroic ages. And surely nothing can set the character of *Ulysses* in a more agreeable point of light, than what *Telemachus* here delivers of it; "He was the friend of all mankind." *Eustathius* observes, that *ἐπίτροπος* has a middle signification; that it implies that *Ulysses* behaved benevolently to all men; or that all men behaved benevolently to *Ulysses*; either sense makes *Ulysses* a very amiable person: He must be a friend to all men, to whom all men are friends.

18 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

Freighted with Iron from my native-land,

I steer my voyage to the *Brutian* strand;

235 To gain by commerce, for the labour'd mass,

A just proportion of refulgent Brass.

Far from your Capital my ship resides

At *Reithrus*, and secure at anchor rides ;

Where waving groves on airy *Neion* grow,

240 Supremely tall, and shade the deeps below.

Thence to re-visit your imperial dome,

An old hereditary Guest I come :

Your Father's friend. *Laertes* can relate

Our faith unspotted, and its early date ;

V. 234. *I steer my voyage to the Brutian strand.*] In the country of the *Brutians*, in the lower part of *Italy*, was a town call'd *Temese*. That *Homer* here meant this city, and not one of the same name in *Cyprus*, appears not only because this was famous for works of brass, but because (as *Strabo* observes) *Ithaca* lay in the direct way from *Taphos* to this city of the *Bruttii* ; whereas it was considerably out of the way to pass by *Ithaca* to that of *Cyprus*. The same Author says, that the rooms for preparing of brass were remaining in his time, tho' then out of use. *Ovid. Met. 25.*

Hippotadaque domos regis, Temeseque metalla.

And *Statius, Sylv.*

———*se totis Temese dedit hausta metallis.*

Bochart is of opinion, that the name of *Temese* was given to this town by the *Phenicians*, from the brass it produced, *Temes* in their language signifying Fusion of Metals : an Art to which the *Phenicians* much apply'd themselves. *Enstat. Dacier.*

Who

- 245 Who prest with heart-corroding grief and years,
 To the gay Court a rural shed prefers,
 Where sole of all his train, a Matron sage
 Supports with homely food his drooping age,
 With feeble steps from marshalling his Vines.
- 250 Returning sad, when toilsome day declines.
 With friendly speed, induc'd by erring fame,
 To hail *Ulysses'* safe return I came :
 But still the frown of some celestial pow'r
 With envious joy retards the blissful hour.

v. 245. *Laertes's Retirement.*] This most beautiful passage of *Laertes* has not escap'd the censure of the Critics; they say he acts an unmanly part, he forgets that he is a King, and reduces himself unworthily into the condition of a servant. *Eustathius* gives two reasons for his retirement, which answer those objections; the first is, that he could not endure to see the outrage and insolence of the Suitors; the second, that his Grief for *Ulysses* makes him abandon society, and prefer his vineyard to his Court. This is undoubtedly the picture of human nature under affliction; for sorrow loves solitude. Thus it is, as *Dacier* well observes, that *Menedemus* in *Terence* laments his lost Son: *Menedemus* is the Picture of *Laertes*. Nor does it make any difference, that the one is a King, the other a person of private station: Kings are but ennobled humanity, and are liable, as other men, to as great, if not greater, sensibility.

The word *ἰστρούσσεια* (creeping about his vineyard) has also given offence, as it carries an idea of meanness with it; but *Eustathius* observes, that it excellently expresses the melancholy of *Laertes*, and denotes no meanness of spirit: The same word is apply'd to the great *Achilles* in the *Iliad*, when he laments at the Obsequies of *Patroclus*; and *Horace* no doubt had it in his view,

—————*Tacitum sylvas inter-reptare salubris.*

30 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

- 255 Let not your soul be sunk in sad despair ;
 He lives, he breathes this heav'nly vital air,
 Among a savage race, whose shelfy bounds
 With ceaseless roar the foaming deep surrounds.
 The thoughts which rowl within my ravish'd breast ;
- 260 To me, no Seer, th'inspiring Gods suggest ;
 Nor skill'd, nor studious, with prophetic eye
 To judge the winged Omens of the sky.
 Yet hear this certain speech, nor deem it vain ;
 Though Adamantine bonds the chief restrain,
- 265 The dire restraint his wisdom will defeat,
 And soon restore him to his regal seat.
 But, gen'rous youth ! sincere and free declare,
 Are you, of manly growth, his royal heir ?

v. 257. *Among a savage race, &c.*] It is the observation of *Enstathius*, that what *Minerva* here delivers bears resemblance to the Oracles, in which part is false, part true: That *Ulysses* is detain'd in an Island, is a truth ; that he is detain'd by Barbarians, a falsehood: This is done by the Goddess, that she may be thought to be really a man, as she appears to be ; she speaks with the dubiousness of a man, not the certainty of a Goddess ; she raises his expectation, by shewing she has an insight into futurity ; and to engage his belief, she discovers in part the truth to *Telemachus*. Neither was it necessary or convenient for *Telemachus* to know the whole truth : for if he had known that *Ulysses* inhabited a desert, detain'd by a Goddess, he must of consequence have known of his return, (for he that could certify the one, could certify the other,) and so had never gone in search of him ; and it would hence have happen'd, that *Homer* had been depriv'd of giving us those graces of Poetry which arise from the voyage of *Telemachus*. *Enstathius*.

For

For sure *Ulysses* in your look appears,

270 The same his features, if the same his years.

Such was that face, on which I dwelt with joy

Ere Greece assembled stem'd the tydes to *Troy*;

But parting then for that detested shore,

Our eyes, unhappy! never greeted more.

275 To prove a genuine birth (the Prince replies)

On Female truth assenting faith relies;

Thus

v. 275. *To prove a genuine birth, &c.*] There is an appearance of something very shocking in this speech of *Telemachus*. It literally runs thus: *My mother assures me that I am the son of Ulysses, but I know it not.* It seems to reflect upon his mother's chastity, as if he had a doubt of his own legitimacy. This seeming simplicity in *Telemachus*, says *Enstathius*, is the effect of a troubled spirit; it is grief that makes him doubt if he can be the son of the great, the generous *Ulysses*; it is no reflection upon *Penelope*, and consequently no fault in *Telemachus*: It is an undoubted truth that the mother only knows the legitimacy of the child: Thus *Enripides*,

Ἡ μὲν, γὰρ αὐτῆς οἶδ' ὅτι αὖτ' οἶσται.

that is, The mother knows the child, the father only believes it.

Thus also *Menander*,

Ἀὐτὸν γὰρ εἰδὼς οἶδ' ὅτι αὖτ' ἐγένετο
Ἀλλ' ὑπονοῶμεν πάντες ἢ πισύσομεν.

that is, no man knows assuredly who begot him, we only guess it, and believe it.

Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* is also of this opinion;

Ἀρσα περὶ τῶν τέκνων κρίνουν αἱ γυναῖκες.

What I have here said, is translated literally from *Enstathius*, and if it edifies the Reader I am content. But the meaning of the passage is this, *Mentes* asks *Telemachus* if he be the son of *Ulysses*;

32 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

Thus manifest of right, I build my claim

Sure-founded on a fair Maternal fame,

Ulysses' Son: but happier he, whom fate

280 Hath plac'd beneath the storms which tofs the great!

Happier the son, whose hoary fire is blest

With humble affluence, and domestic rest!

Happier than I, to future empire born,

But doom'd a Father's wretched fate to mourn!

285 To whom, with aspect mild, the Guest divine,

Oh true descendant of a scepter'd line!

The Gods, a glorious fate from anguish free

To chaste *Penelope's* increase decree.

But say, yon' jovial Troop so gaily drest,

290 Is this a bridal, or a friendly feast?

Or from their deed I rightlier may divine,

Unseemly flown with insolence and wine?

Unwelcome revellers, whose lawless joy

Pains the sage ear, and hurts the sober eye.

he replies, "*So my mother assures me; but nothing sate so wretched
as I am could proceed from that great man.*"

But however this may be reconciled to truth, I believe few Ladies would take it as a compliment, if their sons shou'd tell them there was some room to doubt of their legitimacy: there may be abundance of truth in it, and yet very little decency.

Magni.

- 295 Magnificence of old, (the Prince reply'd,)
 Beneath our roof with Virtue cou'd reside;
 Unblam'd abundance crown'd the royal board,
 What time this dome rever'd her prudent Lord;
 Who now (so heav'n decrees) is doom'd to mourn;
 [300 Bitter constraint! erroneous and forlorn.
 Better the Chief, on *Ilium's* hostile plain
 Had fall'n surrounded with his warlike train;
 Or safe return'd, the race of glory past,
 New to his friends embrace, had breath'd his last!
- 305 Then grateful *Greece* with streaming eyes wou'd raise
 Historic Marbles, to record his praise;
 His praise, eternal on the faithful stone,
 Had with transmissive honour grac'd his Son.
 Now snatch'd by Harpies to the dreary coast,
 310 Sunk is the Hero, and his glory lost!
 Vanish'd at once! unheard of, and unknown!
 And I, his Heir in misery alone.
 Nor for a dear, lost Father only flow
 The filial tears, but woe succeeds to woe:

v. 309. *Now snatch'd by Harpies, &c.*] The meaning of this expression is, that *Ulysses* has not had the rites of sepulture. This among the Ancients was esteem'd the greatest of calamities, as it hinder'd the Shades of the deceased from entering into the state of the happy.

- 315 To tempt the spouseless Queen with am'rous wiles,
 Resort the Nobles from the neighb'ring Isles;
 From *Samos*, circled with th' *Ionian* main,
Dulichium, and *Zacynthus*' sylvan reign:
 Ev'n with presumptuous hope her bed t'ascend,
- 320 The Lords of *Ithaca* their right pretend.
 She seems attentive to their pleaded vows,
 Her heart detesting what her ear allows.
 They, vain expectants of the bridal hour,
 My stores in riotous expence devour,
- 325 In feast and dance the mirthful months employ,
 And meditate my doom, to crown their joy.
 With tender pity touch'd, the Goddess cry'd:
 Soon may kind heav'n a sure relief provide,

v. 315. To tempt the spouseless Queen——resort the Nobles.] It is necessary to reconcile the conduct of the Suitors to probability, since it has so great a share in the process of the *Odyssey*. It may seem incredible that *Penelope*, who is a Queen, in whom the supreme power is lodg'd, should not dismiss such unwelcome intruders, especially since many of them were her own subjects: Besides, it seems an extraordinary way of courtship in them, to ruin the person to whom they make their addresses.

To solve this objection we must consider the nature of the *Grecian* governments: The chief men of the land had great authority; Tho' the government was monarchical, it was not despotic; *Laertes* was retir'd, and disabled with age; *Telemachus* was yet in his minority; and the fear of any violence either against her own person, or against her son, might deter *Penelope* from using any endeavours to remove men of such insolence, and such power.
Dacier,

Soon

Soon may your Sire discharge the vengeance due,

330 And all your wrongs the proud oppressors rue!

Oh! in that portal shou'd the Chief appear,

Each hand tremendous with a brazen spear,

In radiant Panoply his limbs incas'd ;

(For so of old my father's court he grac'd,

335 When social mirth unbent his serious soul,

O'er the full banquet, and the sprightly bowl)

He then from *Ephyre*, the fair domain

Of *Ilus* sprung from *Jason's* royal strain,

Measur'd a length of seas, a toilsome length, in vain.

340 For voyaging to learn the direful art

To taint with deadly drugs the barbed dart ;

v. 341. *To taint with deadly drugs the barbed dart.*] It is necessary to explain this passage. It seems at first view, as if *Ulysses* had requested what a good man could not grant. *Ilus*, says *Mentes*, deny'd the Poison, because he fear'd the anger of the Gods ; and the poison it self is call'd by *Homer* *Ἀνδροπόνον*, as if it were design'd against mankind. *Enstathius* defends *Ulysses* variously: He intended, says he, to employ it against beasts only, that infested his country, or in hunting. He assigns another reason, and says that the Poet is preparing the way to give an air of probability to the destruction of the Suitors. He poisons his arrows, that every wound may be mortal ; on this account the poison may be call'd *ανδροπόνον* ; for it is certain in the wars of *Troy*, poison'd arrows were not in use, for many persons who were wounded recover'd ; so that of necessity they must be reserv'd for domestic occasions. From what has been said we may collect the reason why *Anchialus* granted the poison to *Ulysses*, and *Ilus* deny'd it; *Anchialus* was the friend of *Ulysses*, and knew that he would not employ it to any ill purpose ; but *Ilus*, who was a stranger to him, was afraid lest he should abuse it. *Enstathius*.

36 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

Observant of the Gods, and sternly just,

Ilus refus'd t'impart the baneful trust:

With friendlier zeal my father's soul was fir'd,

345 The drugs he knew, and gave the boon desir'd,

Appear'd he now with such heroic port,

As then conspicuous at the *Taphian* court;

Soon shou'd yon' boasters cease their haughty strife,

Or each atone his guilty love with life.

350 But of his wish'd return the care resign;

Be future vengeance to the pow'rs divine.

My sentence hear: With stern distaste avow'd,

To their own districts drive the Suitor-crowd:

When next the morning warms the purple East,

355 Convoke the Peerage, and the Gods attest;

The sorrows of your inmost soul relate;

And form sure plans to save the sinking state.

Shou'd second love a pleasing flame inspire,

And the chaste Queen connubial rites require;

360 Dismiss'd with honour let her hence repair

To great *Icarus*, whose paternal care

Will

v. 360. *Dismiss'd with honour let her hence repair.*] I will lay before the reader literally what *Eustathius* observes upon these words. There is a Solœcism, says he, in these verses or words, that cannot be reduc'd to the rules of construction. It should be *μὴναι*, not *μὴναι αὐτὴν*. How then comes the accusative case

39

Book I. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 37

Will guide her passion, and reward the choice

With wealthy dow'r, and bridal gifts of price.

Then let this dictate of my love prevail:

365 Instant, to foreign realms prepare to sail,

To learn your Father's fortunes: Fame may prove.

Or omen'd Voice (the messenger of Jove)

Propitious to the search. Direct your toil

Thro' the wide Ocean first to sandy Pyle,

to be used instead of the nominative? *Mentes*, adds he, may be suppos'd to have intended to have said ἀποπέμψον, (send thy Mother away;) but considering, in the midst of the Sentence, that such advice was not suitable to be given to *Telemachus*, he checks himself, and suppresses ἀποπέμψον; and no other word immediately occurring, that requir'd an accusative case, he falls into a Solæcism.

But perhaps this is more ingenious than true; tho' *Mentes* was in haste when he spoke it, *Homer* was not when he compos'd it. Might not an error creep into the original by the negligence of a Transcriber, who might write Μυρία for Μήτηρ? This is the more probable, because the one stands in the Verse in every respect as well as the other.

What *Enstatius* adds is very absurd: he says that *Telemachus* must observe both the interpretations, either send thy Mother away, or let thy Mother retire. So that the advice was double, send thy Mother away if thou dost not love her; but if thou art unwilling to grieve her, let her recess be voluntary.

v. 367. Omen'd Voice ——— of Jove.] There is a difficulty in this Passage. In any case of enquiry, any Words that were heard by accident were call'd by the *Latins*, *Omens*; by *Homer*, the voice of *Jupiter*; and he stiles them so, because it is thro' his providence that those words come to our knowledge: κλέος signifies fame or rumour; and the Ancients refer'd all voices or sounds to *Jupiter*; and stil'd him Ζεὺς παρομφαίος. So that the voice of *Jove* implies any words that we hear by chance, from whence we can draw any thing that gives light to our concerns or enquiries.

Dacier. *Enstatius*.

Of

38 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

- 370 Of *Nestor*, hoary Sage, his doom demand;
 Thence speed your voyage to the *Spartan* strand;
 For young *Atrides* to th' *Achaian* coast
 Arriv'd the last of all the victor host.
 If yet *Ulysses* views the light, forbear,
 375 'Till the fleet hours restore the circling year.
 But if his soul hath wing'd the destin'd flight;
 Inhabitant of deep disastrous Night,
 Homeward with pious speed repass the main,
 To the pale Shade funereal rites ordain,
 380 Plant the fair Column o'er the vacant grave,
 A Hero's honours let the Hero have.
 With decent grief the royal dead deplor'd,
 For the chaste Queen select an equal Lord.
 Then let revenge' your daring mind employ,
 385 By fraud or force the Suitor-train destroy,
 And starting into manhood, scorn the boy.
 Hast thou not heard how young *Orestes* fir'd
 With great revenge, immortal praise acquir'd?

His

v. 387. *Hast thou not heard, &c.*] It may seem that this example of *Orestes* does not come fully up to the purpose intended: There is a wide difference in the circumstances: *Orestes* slew an adulterer, and a single person, with an adulteress. The designs of *Telemachus* are not against one, but many enemies; neither are they adulterers, nor have they slain the father of *Telemachus*, as is the case of *Orestes*: nor is *Penelope* an adulteress. The intent there-
 fore

Book I. *HOMER's ODYSSEY.* 39

His virgin sword *Ægysthus'* veins imbra'd;

390 The murd'rer fell, and blood aton'd for blood!

O greatly blest'd with ev'ry blooming grace!

With equal steps the paths of glory trace;

Join to that royal youth's, your rival name,

And shine eternal in the sphere of fame——

395 But my Associates now my stay deplore,

Impatient on the hoarse-resounding shore.

Thou, heedful of advice, secure proceed;

My praise the precept is, be thine the deed.

The counsel of my friend (the Youth rejoin'd)

400 Imprints conviction on my grateful mind.

So Fathers speak (persuasive speech and mild!)

Their sage experience to the fav'rite child.

But since to part, for sweet refection due

The genial viands let my train renew;

405 And the rich pledge of plighted faith receive;

Worthy the heir of *Ishaca* to give.

fore of the Goddess is only to shew what a glorious act it is to defend our parents: *Orestes*, says *Mentes*, is every where celebrated for honouring his father, and thou shalt obtain equal honour by defending thy mother.

The sense that *καταφόνος* here bears is remarkable, it signifies not only a person who kills his own father, but who kills the father of any other person. *Eustathius*.

Defer

40 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

Defer the promis'd boon, (the Goddess cries,
Celestial azure brightning in her eyes)

And let me now regain the *Reithrian* port:

410 From *Temese* return'd, your royal court

I shall revisit; and that pledge receive,

And gifts, memorial of our friendship, leave.

Abrupt, with eagle-speed she cut the sky;
Instant invisible to mortal eye.

415 Then first he recognis'd th'Æth'ial guest;

Wonder and joy alternate fire his breast:

Heroic thoughts infus'd his heart dilate,

Revolving much his father's doubtful fate:

At length compos'd, he join'd the suitor-throng;

420 Hush'd in attention to the warbled song.

His

v. 413. ———— *With eagle-speed she cut the sky,
Instant invisible* ————.]

I pass over the several interpretations that have been given to the word *ἀόρατα*; some say it implies she flew up the chimney, &c. In reality it signifies a species of an eagle; but it may also signify the same as *ἀφανής* (invisible,) either of the latter senses are natural, or both together, like an eagle she disappear'd. *Enstatismus.*

v. 420. *Hush'd in attention to the warbled song.*] There may be two reasons why this is inserted; either the Suitors were pleas'd with the sweetness of the song, or the subject of it; they sat attentive to hear the death of *Ulysses*, in the process of his story. This gives us a reason why immediately *Penelope* descended to stop the song; she fear'd lest he might touch upon the story of *Ulysses*, and say that he dy'd in his return. This would have reduc'd her to the utmost necessity, and she could not have deferr'd to marry. *Phemius* would have certainly found credit, for Poets were believ'd

Book I. *HOMER'S ODYSSEY.* 41

His tender theme the charming Lyrist chose
Minerva's anger, and the direful woes
 Which voyaging from *Troy* the Victors bore,
 While storms vindictive intercept the shore.

- 425 The shrilling airs the vaulted roof rebounds,
 Reflecting to the Queen the silver sounds.
 With grief renew'd the weeping fair descends;
 Their sovereign's step a virgin train attends :
 A veil of richest texture wrought, she wears,
 430 And silent, to the joyous hall repairs.
 There from the portal, with her mild command
 Thus gently checks the minstrel's tuneful hand.

Hev'd to be inspir'd by the Gods ; they were look'd upon as Prophets, and to have something of divinity in them, as appears from *Demodocus* in the 8th book of the *Odyssey*. Besides there was a further necessity to put a stop to the song. If *Phemius* had declar'd him to be dead, *Penelope* could not have avoided marriage ; if alive, the Suitors might have desisted, or arm'd themselves against *Ulysses*, and then their Deaths, one of the principal incidents of the Poem, could not have follow'd ; neither could *Telemachus* have gone in search of his father, if he had foreknown his death, or sudden return. It is therefore artful in the Poet to cut the song short, he reserves the story of *Ulysses* for future narration, and brings all this about by a very probable method, by the interposition of *Penelope*, who requests that some other story may be chosen, a story that she can hear without sorrow.

It is very customary for women to be present at the entertainments of men ; as appears from the conduct of *Helen*, *Arete*, *Nausicaa*, and *Penelope* in divers parts of the *Odyssey* : She is here introduced with the greatest decency ; she enters not the room, but stands with tears at the threshold ; and even at that distance appears with her face shaded by a veil.

Enslathins.

Phemius !

44 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

'Till *Pallas*, piteous of her plaintive cries,
In slumber clos'd her silver-streaming eyes.

465 Mean-time rekindl'd at the royal charms,
Tumultuous love each beating bosom warms;
Intemp'rate rage a wordy war began;
But bold *Telemachus* assum'd the man.

Instant (he cry'd) your female discord end,

470 Ye deedless boasters! and the song attend:
Obey that sweet compulsion, nor profane
With dissonance the smooth melodious strain.
Pacific now prolong the jovial feast;
But when the dawn reveals the rosy East,

475 I, to the Peers assembled, shall propose
The firm resolve I here in few disclose.
No longer live the cankers of my court;
All to your several states with speed resort;
Waste in wild riot what your land allows,

480 There ply the early feast, and late carouse.
But if, to honour lost, 'tis still decreed
For you my bowl shall flow, my flocks shall bleed,
Judge and revenge my right, impartial *Jove*!
By him, and all th' immortal thrones above,

485 (A sacred oath) each proud oppressor slain
Shall with inglorious gore this marble stain.

Aw'd

Book I. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 45

Aw'd by the Prince, thus haughty, bold, and young.
Rage gnaw'd the lip, and wonder chain'd the tongue.

Silence at length the gay *Antinous* broke,

490 Constrain'd a smile, and thus ambiguous spoke,

What God to your untutor'd youth affords

This headlong torrent of amazing words?

v. 491. *The speech of Antinous.*] *Antinous* and *Eurymachus* are *Ithacensians*, and are call'd the chief of the Suitors. It is therefore necessary to distinguish their characters; *Antinous* is violent, and determin'd against *Ulysses*; *Eurymachus* more gentle and subtle: *Antinous* derides, *Eurymachus* flatters.

This speech of *Antinous* is a conceal'd raillery; he tells *Telemachus*, that *Jove* inspires his soul with wisdom, but means that his education has been such, that he had learn'd nothing from man; he wishes (out of a seemingly kind concern for him) that he may never reign in *Ithaca*, because the weight of a crown is a burthen; and concludes with mentioning his hereditary title to it, to insinuate that is his by descent only, and not by merit.

Telemachus, in his answer, wisely dissembles the affront of *Antinous*, he takes it in the better sense, and seems to differ only in opinion about the Regality. Think you, says he, that to be a King is to be miserable? To be a King, in my judgment, is to enjoy affluence and honour. He asserts his claim to the succession of his father, yet seems to decline it, to lay the suspicions of the Suitors asleep, that they may not prevent the measures he takes to obtain it. *Enstathius*.

The speech of *Eurymachus* confirms the former observation, that this Suitor is of a more soft and moderate behaviour than *Antinous*: He cloaths ill designs with a seeming humanity, and appears a friend, while he carries on the part of an enemy: *Telemachus* had said, that if it was the will of *Jupiter*, he would ascend the Throne of *Ithaca*: *Eurymachus* answers, that this was as the Gods shou'd determine; an insinuation that they regarded not his claim from his father. *Telemachus* said he would maintain himself in the possession of his present inheritance: *Eurymachus* wishes that no one may arrive to dispossess him; the latent meaning of which is, "we of your own country are sufficient for that design." If these observations of *Enstathius* be true, *Eurymachus* was not a less enemy than *Antinous*, but a better dissembler.

42 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

Phemius ! let acts of Gods, and Heroes old,
 What ancient bards in hall and bow'r have told,
 435 Attemper'd to the Lyre, your voice employ ;
 Such the pleas'd ear will drink with silent joy.
 But oh ! forbear that dear, disastrous name,
 To sorrow sacred, and secure of fame :
 My bleeding bosom sickens at the sound,
 440 And ev'ry piercing note inflicts a wound.
 Why, dearest object of my duteous love,
 (Reply'd the Prince) will you the Bard reprove ?
 Oft, *Jove's* ætherial rays (resistless fire)
 The chanter's soul and raptur'd song inspire ;
 445 Instinct divine ! nor blame severe his choice,
 Warbling the *Grecian* woes with harp and voice :

v. 443. *Oft Jove's ætherial rays, &c.*] *Telemachus* here reproveth his mother for commanding *Phemius* to desist, or not to make *Ulysses* the subject of his song : by saying, that it was not in the Poet's own power to chuse his subject, which was frequently dictated and inspired by the Gods. This is a particular instance of the opinion the Ancients held as to the immediate inspiration of their Poets. The words in the original evidently bear this sense. *If the subject displease you, 'tis not the Poet but Jupiter is to blame, who inspires men of invention, as he himself pleases.* And *Mad. Dacier* strangely mistakes this passage, in rendring it, *'tis not the Poet but Jupiter who is the cause of our misfortunes, for 'tis he who dispenses to wretched mortals good or evil as he pleases.* At the same time she acknowledges the word *ἀλγεῖναι*, which she here renders *laborious, or wretched*, to signify persons of wit, in the beginning of lib. 4. and persons of skill and ability in their art, in lib. II.

Book I. *HOMER'S ODYSSEY.* 43

For novel lays attract our ravish'd ears;
But old, the mind with inattention hears.

Patient permit the sadly-pleasing strain ;

450 Familiar now with grief, your tears refrain,

And in the publick woe forget your own ;

You weep not for a perish'd Lord, alone.

What *Greeks*, now wand'ring in the *Stygian* gloom,

With your *Ulysses* shar'd an equal doom !

455 Your widow'd hours, apart, with female toil

And various labours of the loom, beguile ;

There rule, from palace-cares remote and free,

That care to man belongs, and most to me.

Mature beyond his years the Queen admires

460 His sage reply, and with her train retires.

Then swelling sorrows burst their former bounds,

With echoing grief afresh the dome resounds ;

v. 455. *Your widow'd hours, apart, with female toil, &c.*] These verses are taken literally from the 6th book of the *Iliad*, except that *μῦθος* is inserted instead of *ἀόλιμος*; *Eustathius* explains the passage thus: *Women are not forbid entirely to speak, for women are talking animals, λαλῶν ζῶον, they have the faculty of talking, and indeed are rational creatures*; but they must not give too much liberty to that unruly member, in the company of men. *Sophocles* advises well,

Τῦχαι, γυναῖξί κόσμον ἢ σιγὴν φέρεται.

O woman, silence is the ornament of thy sex. *Madam Dacier*, tho' she plunders almost every thing, has spared this observation.

Till

44 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

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The firm resolve I here in few disclose.
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All to your several states with speed resort;
Waste in wild riot what your land allows,

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But if, to honour lost, 'tis still decreed
For you my bowl shall flow, my flocks shall bleed,
Judge and revenge my right, impartial *Jove*!
By him, and all th' immortal thrones above,

485 (A sacred oath) each proud oppressor slain
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Book I. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 45

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 Silence at length the gay *Antinous* broke,
 190 Constrain'd a smile, and thus ambiguous spoke,
 What God to your untutor'd youth affords
 This headlong torrent of amazing words?

v. 491. *The speech of Antinous.*] *Antinous* and *Eurymachus* are *Ithacensians*, and are call'd the chief of the Suitors. It is therefore necessary to distinguish their characters; *Antinous* is violent, and determin'd against *Ulysses*; *Eurymachus* more gentle and subtle: *Antinous* derides, *Eurymachus* flatters.

This speech of *Antinous* is a conceal'd raillery; he tells *Telemachus*, that *Jove* inspires his soul with wisdom, but means that his education has been such, that he had learn'd nothing from man; he wishes (out of a seemingly kind concern for him) that he may never reign in *Ithaca*, because the weight of a crown is a burthen; and concludes with mentioning his hereditary title to it, to insinuate that is his by descent only, and not by merit.

Telemachus, in his answer, wisely dissembles the affront of *Antinous*, he takes it in the better sense, and seems to differ only in opinion about the Regality. Think you, says he, that to be a King is to be miserable? To be a King, in my judgment, is to enjoy affluence and honour. He asserts his claim to the succession of his father, yet seems to decline it, to lay the suspicions of the Suitors asleep, that they may not prevent the measures he takes to obtain it. *Enslathinus*.

The speech of *Eurymachus* confirms the former observation, that this Suitor is of a more soft and moderate behaviour than *Antinous*: He cloaths ill designs with a seeming humanity, and appears a friend, while he carries on the part of an enemy: *Telemachus* had said, that if it was the will of *Jupiter*, he would ascend the Throne of *Ithaca*: *Eurymachus* answers, that this was as the Gods shou'd determine; an insinuation that they regarded not his claim from his father. *Telemachus* said he would maintain himself in the possession of his present inheritance: *Eurymachus* wishes that no one may arrive to dispossess him; the latent meaning of which is, "we of your own country are sufficient for that design." If these observations of *Enslathinus* be true, *Eurymachus* was not a less enemy than *Antinous*, but a better dissembler.

46 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

May *Jove* delay thy reign, and cumber late
So bright a genius with the toils of state!

495 Those toils (*Telemachus* serene replies)
Have charms, with all their weight, t'allure the wise,
Fast by the Throne obsequious *Fame* resides,
And *Wealth* incessant rolls her golden tides.
Nor let *Antinous* rage, if strong desire

500 Of wealth and fame a youthful bosom fire:
Elect by *Jove* his Delegate of sway,
With joyous pride the summons I'd obey.
Whene'er *Ulysses* roams the realm of Night,
Shou'd factious pow'r dispute my lineal right,

505 Some other *Greeks* a fairer claim may plead;
To your pretence their title wou'd precede.
At least, the sceptre lost, I still shou'd reign
Sole o'er my vassals, and domestic train.

To this *Eurymachus*. To heav'n alone
510 Refer the choice to fill the vacant Throne.
Your patrimonial stores in peace possess;
Undoubted all your filial claim confess:
Your private right shou'd impious pow'r invade,
The peers of *Ithaca* wou'd arm in aid.

515 But say, that Stranger-guest who late withdrew,
What, and from whence? his name and lineage shew.

Book I. *HOMER'S ODYSSEY.* 47

His grave demeanour, and majestic grace

Speak him descended of no vulgar race :

Did he some loan of ancient right require,

20 Or came fore-runner of your scepter'd Sire?

Oh son of *Polybus* ! the Prince replies,

No more my Sire will glad these longing eyes :

The Queen's fond hope inventive rumour cheers,

Or vain diviners' dreams divert her fears.

25 That stranger-guest the *Taphian* realm obeys,

A realm defended with incircling seas.

Mentes, an ever-honour'd name, of old

High in *Ulysses'* social list inroll'd.

Thus he, tho' conscious of th'ætherial Guest,

30 Answer'd evasive of the fly request.

Mean time the Lyre rejoins the sprightly lay ;

Love-dittied airs, and dance, conclude the day.

But when the Star of Eve, with golden light

Adorn'd the matron-brow of sable Night ;

35 The mirthful train dispersing quit the court,

And to their several domes to Rest resort.

A tow'ring structure to the palace join'd ;

To this his steps the thoughtful Prince inclin'd ;

48 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book I.

In his pavilion there to sleep repairs;

540 The lighted torch the sage *Euryclea* bears.

(Daughter of *Ops*, the just *Pisenor's* son,

For twenty beeves by great *Laertes* won;

In rosy prime with Charms attractive grac'd,

Honour'd by him, a gentle Lord and chaste,

545 With dear esteem: too wise, with jealous strife

To taint the joys of sweet, connubial life.

Sole with *Telemachus* her service ends,

A child she nurs'd him, and a man attends.)

v. 540. *The sage Euryclea.*] *Euryclea* was a very aged person; she was bought by *Laertes*, to nurse *Ulysses*; and in her old age attends *Telemachus*: She cost *Laertes* twenty oxen; that is, a certain quantity of money (*ὅλως μεταλλικῆς*) which would buy twenty oxen: or perhaps the form of an ox was stamp'd upon the metal and from thence had its appellation.

The simplicity of these heroic times is remarkable; an old woman is the only attendant upon the son of a King: She lights him to his apartment, takes care of his cloaths, and hangs them up at the side of his bed. Greatness then consisted not in shew, but in the mind: this conduct proceeded not from the meanness of poverty, but from the simplicity of manners. *Enslathius.*

Having now gone thro' the first book, I shall only observe to the Reader, that the whole of it does not take up the compass of an entire day: When *Minerva* appears to *Telemachus* the Suitors were preparing to sit down to the banquet at noon; and the business of the first book concludes with the day. It is true, that the Gods hold a debate before the descent of *Minerva*, and some small time must be allow'd for that transaction. It is remarkable, that there is not one Simile in this book, except we allow those three words to be one, *ὅπως δ' ὧς ἀνίπαυα*; The same observation is true of the first book of the *Iliad*. See the Notes on that place.

Whilst

Whilst to his couch himself the Prince address,
 550 The duteous dame receiv'd the purple vest:
 The purple vest with decent care dispos'd,
 The silver ring she pull'd, the door re-clos'd;
 The bolt, obedient to the filken cord,
 To the strong staple's inmost depth restor'd,
 555 Secur'd the valves. There, wrapp'd in silent shade,
 Pensive, the rules the Goddess gave, he weigh'd;
 Stretch'd on the downy fleece, no rest he knows,
 And in his raptur'd soul the Vision glows.





*Jupiter sends his Eagles :
A Priest explains this Prodigy.*

THE
SECOND BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

D 2



The ARGUMENT.

The Council of *Ithaca*.

Telemachus, *in the assembly of the Lords of Ithaca*, complains of the injustice done him by the Suitors, and insists upon their departure from his Palace; appealing to the Princes, and exciting the people to declare against them. The Suitors endeavour to justify their stay, at least till he shall send the Queen to the Court of Icarus her father; which he refuses. There appears a prodigy of two Eagles in the sky, which an Augur expounds to the ruin of the Suitors. Telemachus then demands a Vessel to carry him to Pylos and Sparta, there to enquire of his father's fortunes. Pallas in the shape of Mentor (an ancient friend of Ulysses) helps him to a ship, assists him in preparing necessaries for the voyage, and embarks with him that night; which concludes the second day from the Opening of the Poem.

The SCENE continues in the Palace of Ulysses in *Ithaca*.

THE



THE
SECOND BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

NOW red'ning from the dawn, the Morning ray
Glow'd in the front of Heav'n, and gave the Day.
The youthful Heroe, with returning light,
Rose anxious from th' inquietudes of Night.

A royal

This book opens with the first appearance of *Telemachus* upon the stage of action. And *Bossu* observes the great judgment of the Poet, in beginning with the transactions of *Ithaca* in the absence of *Ulysses*: By this method he sets the conduct of *Telemachus*, *Penelope*, and the Suitors, in a strong point of light; they all have a large share in the story of the Poem, and consequently ought to have distinguishing characters. It is as necessary in Epic Poetry, as it is on the Theatre, to let us immediately into the character of every person whom the Poet introduces: This adds perspicuity to the story, and we immediately grow acquainted with each personage, and interest our selves in the good or ill fortune that attends them thro' the whole relation.

D 3

Telemachus

54 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book II.

5 A royal robe he wore with graceful pride,
 A two-edg'd faulchion threaten'd by his side,
 Embroider'd sandals glitter'd as he trod,
 And forth he mov'd, majestic as a God.
 Then by his Heralds, restless of delay,
 10 To council calls the Peers: the Peers obey.
 Soon as in solemn form th' assembly sate,
 From his high dome himself descends in state.
 Bright in his hand a pond'rous javelin shin'd;
 Two Dogs, a faithful guard, attend behind;

Pallas

Telemachus is now about twenty years of age: In the eleventh book, the Poet tells us, he was an infant in the arms of his mother when *Ulysses* sail'd to *Troy*; that Heroe was absent near twenty years, and from hence we may gather the exact age of *Telemachus*. He is every where describ'd as a person of piety to the Gods, of duty to his parents, and as a lover of his country: he is prudent, temperate, and valiant: and the Poet well sets off the importance of this young Heroe, by giving him the Goddess of War and Wisdom for his constant attendant.

v. 13.—*In his hand a pond'rous javelin shin'd.*] The Poet describes *Telemachus* as if he were marching against an enemy, or going to a council of war, rather than to an assembly of Peers in his own country: Two reasons are assign'd for this conduct; either this was the common usage of Princes in those times, or *Telemachus* might look upon the Suitors as enemies and consequently go to council in arms as against enemies. *Enstathius*.

v. 14. *Two Dogs, a faithful guard, attend behind.*] This passage has not escap'd the raillery of the Critics; they look upon it as a mean description of a Heroe and a Prince, to give him a brace of dogs only for his guards or attendants: But such was the simplicity of ancient Princes, that except in war they had rarely any attendants or equipage. And we may be confident, *Homer* copies after the custom of the time, unless we can be so absurd as to suppose

Book II. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 55

15 *Pallas* with grace divine his form improves,
And gazing crowds admire him as he moves.

His Father's throne he fill'd: while distant stood
The hoary Peers, and Aged Wisdom bow'd.

'Twas silence all, at last *Ægyptius* spoke;

20 *Ægyptius*, by his age and sorrows broke:

A length of days his soul with prudence crown'd,

A length of days had bent him to the Ground.

**Antigonus*. His eldest *hope in arms to *Ilium* came,

By great *Ulysses* taught the path to fame;

25, But (hapless youth) the hideous *Cyclops* tore

His quiv'ring limbs, and quaff'd his spouting gore.

Three

pose, he would feign low circumstances unnecessarily, thro' a want of judgment.

Virgil judg'd otherwise, and thought this circumstance worthy of his imitation.

*Quin etiam gemini custodes limine ab alto
Procedunt, gressumque canes comitantur Herilem.*

Achilles is describ'd in the *Iliad* with the same attendants.

—nine large dogs domestick at his board.

B. 23?

Poetry, observes *Dacier*, is like Painting, which draws the greatest beauties from the simplest customs: and even in history, we receive a sensible pleasure from the least circumstance that denotes the customs of ancient times. It may be added, that the Poet, as well as the Painter, is obliged to follow the customs of the age of which he writes, or paints: a modern dress would ill become *Achilles* or *Ulysses*, such a conduct would be condemned as an absurdity in painting, and ought to be so in poetry.

D 4

V. 32.

Three sons remain'd: To climb with haughty fires
 The royal bed, *Eurynomus* aspires;
 The rest with duteous love his griefs asswage,

30 And ease the Sire of half the cares of age.

Yet still his *Antiphus* he loves, he mourns,
 And as he stood, he spoke and wept by turns.

Since great *Ulysses* fought the *Phrygian* plains,
 Within these walls inglorious silence reigns.

Say

v. 31. *Yet still his Antiphus he loves, he mourns.*] *Homer*, says *Enstathius*, inserts these particularities concerning the family of *Aegyptius*, to give an air of truth to his story. It does not appear that *Aegyptius* knew the certainty of the death of *Antiphus*; (for it is the Poet who relates it, and not the father;) whence, as *Dacier* observes, should he learn it? he only laments him, according to the prevailing opinion that all the companions of *Ulysses* were lost with *Ulysses*.

v. 33. *Since great Ulysses, &c.*] We are here told, that there never had been any council conven'd in *Ithaca*, since the departure of *Ulysses*. The general design and moral of the *Odyssey*, is to inform us of the mischievous effects which the Absence of a King and Father of a Family produces: We deprive, as *Bossu* observes, the Poem of its very soul, and spoil the Fable, if we retrench from it the disorders which the Suitors create in the absence of *Ulysses*, both in his family and dominions. Nothing can give us a greater image of those disorders, than what is here related: What must a kingdom suffer in twenty years, without a Ruler, without a Council to make Laws or punish enormities? Such is the condition of *Ithaca*: *Laertes* is superannuated; *Penelope* oppress'd by the violence of the Suitors; and *Telemachus* to this time, in his minority.

It is very artful in the Poet to open the assembly by *Aegyptius*: *Telemachus* was the person who conven'd it; and being the greatest personage present, it might be expected that he should open the design of it: But to give *Telemachus* courage, who was young and inexperience'd, *Aegyptius* first rises, and by praising the person who had

- 35 Say then, ye Peers! by whose commands we meet?
 Why here once more in solemn council sit?
 Ye young, ye old, the weighty cause disclose:
 Arrives some message of invading foes?
 Or say, does high necessity of state
- 40 Inspire some Patriot, and demand debate!
 The present Synod speaks its author wise;
 Assist him, *Jove!* thou regent of the skies!
 He spoke. *Telemachus* with transport glows,
 Embrac'd the omen, and majestic rose:
- 45 (His royal hand th'imperial scepter sway'd)
 Then thus, address'ing to *Ægyptius*, said.
 Rev'rend old man! lo here confess he stands
 By whom ye meet; my grief your care demands.
 No story I unfold of publick woes,
- 50 Nor bear advices of impending foes:
 Peace the blest land, and joys incessant crown;
 Of all this happy realm, I grieve alone.

had summon'd them (of whom he seems ignorant) gives *Telemachus* to understand he has friends among the assembly: This he could no other way so safely have done, considering the power of the Suitors. By this means, *Telemachus* is encouraged to speak boldly, and arraign the disorders of the Suitors with the utmost freedom.

58 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book II.

For my lost Sire continual sorrows spring,
 The great, the good; your Father, and your King.
 55 Yet more; our house from its foundation bows,
 Our foes are pow'rful, and your sons the foes:
 Hither, unwelcome to the Queen they come;
 Why seek they not the rich *Icarian* dome?
 If she must wed, from other hands require
 60 The dowry; Is *Telemachus* her Sire?
 Yet thro' my court the noise of Revel rings,
 And wastes the wise frugality of Kings.

v. 54. *Your Father, and your King.*] *Telemachus* here sets the character of *Ulysses*, as a King, in the most agreeable point of light: He rul'd his people with the same mildness as a father rules his children. This must needs have a very happy effect upon the audience; not only as it shews *Ulysses* to have been a good Governor; but as it recalls the memory of the happiness they receiv'd from that mild government, and obliquely condemns them of ingratitude who had forgot it. By this method also the Poet interests us deeply in the sufferings of *Ulysses*; we cannot see a good man and good King in distress, without the most tender emotions.

v. 55. *Yet more——our house, &c.*] What *Telemachus* here says has given offence to the Critics; they think it indecent for a son to say, that he bears with more regret the disorder of his family than the loss of his father; yet this objection will vanish, if we weigh *Penelope*, *Telemachus*, and his whole posterity, against the single person of *Ulysses*.

But what chiefly takes away this objection is, that *Telemachus* was still in hopes of his father's return: for *ἀπώσεα* does not imply necessarily his death, but absence: and then both with justice and decency, *Telemachus* may say that he grieves more for the destruction of his family, than for the absence of *Ulysses*.

See

Scarce all my herds their luxury suffice;
Scarce all my wine their midnight hours supplies.

- 65 Safe in my youth, in riot still they grow,
Nor in the helpless Orphan dread a foe.
But come it will, the time when manhood grants
More pow'rful advocates than vain complaints.
Approach that hour! unsufferable wrong
- 70 Cries to the Gods, and vengeance sleeps too long.
Rise then, ye Peers! with virtuous anger rise!
Your fame revere, but most th' avenging skies.
By all the deathless pow'rs that reign above,
By righteous *Themis* and by thund'ring *Jove*,

v. 63. *Scarce all my herds their luxury suffice.*] This passage is ridicul'd by the Critics; they set it in a wrong light, and then grow very pleasant upon it: *Telemachus* makes a sad outcry because the Suitors eat his sheep, his beeves, and fatted goats; and at last falls into tears. The truth is, the riches of Kings and Princes, in those early ages, consisted chiefly in flocks and cattle; thus *Entes* and *Paris* are describ'd as tending their flocks, &c. and *Abraham* in the scriptures, as abounding in this kind of wealth.

These Critics would form a different idea of the state and condition of *Telemachus*, if they consider'd that he had been capable to maintain no fewer than an hundred and eight persons in a manner very expensive for many years; for so many (with their attendants) were the Suitors, as appears from the 16th book; and at the same time he kept up the dignity of his own court, and liv'd with great hospitality.

But it is a sufficient answer to the objections against this passage, to observe, that it is not the expence, but manner of it, that *Telemachus* laments: This he expressly declares by the word *μακρός*; and surely a sober man may complain against luxury, without being arraigned of meanness; and against profusion, without being condemn'd for parsimony.

75 (*Themis*, who gives to councils, or denies
 Success; and humbles, or confirms the wise)
 Rise in my aid! suffice the tears that flow
 For my lost Sire, nor add new woe to woe.
 If e'er he bore the sword to strengthen ill,
 80 Or having pow'r to wrong, betray'd the will;
 On me, on me your kindled wrath assuage,
 And bid the voice of lawless riot rage.
 If ruin to our royal race ye doom,
 Be You the spoilers, and our wealth consume.

v. 75. *Themis, who gives to Councils, or denies
 Success.*]

Enstathius observes, that there was a custom to carry the statue of *Themis* to the assemblies in former ages, and carry it back again when those assemblies were dissolv'd; and thus *Themis* may be said to form, and dissolve an assembly. *Dacier* dislikes this assertion, as having no foundation in antiquity; she thinks that the assertion of *Telemachus* is general; that he intimates it is Justice alone that establishes the councils of mankind, and that Injustice confounds and brings the wicked designs of men to confusion.

I have follow'd this interpretation, not only as it suits best with the usual morality of *Homer*, but also as *Jupiter* is mention'd with *Themis*; and no such custom is pretended concerning his statue. He is expressly stil'd by the ancients Ζεύς ἀγοραῖος. In *Sicily* there was an Altar of Ζεύς ἀγοραῖος, or of *Jupiter who presides over Councils*. *Enstathius* from *Herodotus*.

v. 84. *Be You the spoilers, and our wealth consume.*] To understand this passage, we must remember, as *Enstathius* remarks, that *Telemachus* is pleading his Cause before the *Ithacensians*; then he constitutes the Judges of his cause: He therefore prevents an answer which they might make, viz. *We are not the men that are guilty of these outrages*; *Telemachus* rejoins, "It were better for me to suffer from your hands; for by your quiescence you make my affairs desperate;" an intimation that they should rise in his defence.

Then

85 Then might we hope redress from juster laws,
And raise all *Ithaca* to aid our cause:
But while your Sons commit th'unpunish'd wrong,
You make the Arm of Violence too strong.

While thus he spoke, with rage and grief he frown'd,
90 And dash'd th' imperial sceptre to the ground.
The big round tear hung trembling in his eye:
The Synod griev'd, and gave a pitying sigh,
Then silent sat——at length *Antinous* burns
With haughty rage, and sternly thus returns.

95 O insolence of youth! whose tongue affords
Such railing eloquence, and war of words.

v. 91. *The big round tear hung trembling in his eye.*] This passage is not one of those, where the Poet can be blam'd for causing a Heroe to weep. If we consider the youth of *Telemachus*, together with the tenderness agreeable to that time of life; the subjects that demand his concern; the apprehension of the loss of a father; and the desolate state of his mother and kingdom: All these make his readiness to burst into tears an argument, not of any want of spirit in him, but of true sense, and goodness of nature: and is a great propriety, which shews the right judgment of the Poet.

v. 95. *Oh insolence of youth, &c.*] We find *Antinous* always setting himself in the strongest opposition to *Telemachus*; and therefore, he is the first that falls by the spear of *Ulysses*; the Poet observes justice, and as *Antinous* is the first in guilt, he is the first in punishment. What *Antinous* says in this speech concerning the treachery of the female servant of *Penelope*, prepares the way for the punishment *Ulysses* inflicts on some of the maids in the conclusion of the Poem: This is an act of Poetical justice; and it is as necessary in Epic as in Tragic Poetry, to reward the just, and punish the guilty. *Eustathius*.

Studious

Studious thy country's worthies to defame,
 Thy erring voice displays thy Mother's shame.
 Elusive of the bridal day, she gives

100 Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives.

Did not the sun, thro' heav'n's wide azure roll'd,
 For three long years the royal fraud behold?
 While she, laborious in delusion, spread
 The spacious loom, and mix'd the various thread:

105 Where as to life the wond'rous figures rise,
 Thus spoke th' inventive Queen, with artful sighs:

v. 99. *Elusive of the bridal day, she gives
 Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives.*]

It will be necessary to vindicate the character of *Penelope* the Heroine of the Poem, from the aspersions of *Antinous*. It must be confess'd that she has a very hard game to play, she neither dares consent, nor deny; if she consents, she injures *Ulysses*, whom she still expects to return; if she denies, she endangers the Throne, and the life of *Telemachus*, from the violence of the Suitors; so that no other method is left but to elude their addresses.

I must not conceal, what *Eustathius* has mention'd from some Authors, as *Lycophron*, &c. who say that *Penelope* was *ναρσασπίδα*, in plain English, an Harlot; and he quotes *Herodotus*, as affirming that she had a son, named *Pan*, by *Hermes*; but the Bishop declares it is all a scandal; and every body must conclude the same, from her conduct, as describ'd in *Homer*.

To vindicate her in this place, we must consider who it is that speaks: *Antinous*, an unsuccessful Lover: and what he blames as a crime, is really her glory; he blames her because she does not comply with their desires; and it had been an act of guilt to have comply'd. He himself sufficiently vindicates her in the conclusion of his speech, where he extols her above all the race of woman-kind: so that the seeming inconsistency of *Penelope* must be imputed to the necessity of her affairs: she is artful, but not criminal.

The original says, she deceiv'd the Suitors by her messages; a plain intimation, that she us'd no extraordinary familiarities with her Admirers; and thro' the whole course of the Poem she seldom appears in their Assemblies.

“ Tho’

- “ Tho’ cold in death *Ulysses* breathes no more,
 “ Cease yet a while to urge the bridal hour;
 “ Cease, ’till to great *Laertes* I bequeath
 110 “ A task of grief, his ornaments of death.
 “ Left when the Fates his royal ashes claim,
 “ The *Grecian* matrons taint my spotless fame;
 “ When he, whom living mighty realms obey’d,
 “ Shall want in death a shroud to grace his shade.
 115 Thus she: at once the gen’rous train complies,
 Nor fraud mistrusts in virtue’s fair disguise:
 The work she ply’d; but studious of delay,
 By night revers’d the labours of the day.
 While thrice the sun his annual journey made,
 120 The conscious lamp the midnight fraud survey’d;
 Unheard, unseen, three years her arts prevail;
 The fourth, her maid unfolds th’ amazing tale.

v. 109. *Cease, ’till to great Laertes I bequeath*

A task of grief, his ornaments of death.]

It was an ancient custom to dedicate the finest pieces of Weaving and Embroidery, to honour the funerals of the dead: and these were usually wrought by the nearest relations in their life time. Thus in the 22^d *Iliad*, *Andromache* laments, that the body of *Hector* must be exposed to the air, without those ornaments.

ἄνδρα τοῖς ἑμαὶ ἐν μεγάροισι κείνας,
 ἀντιά τε καὶ χαρίεσσά, τετυγμένα χροὶ γυναικῶν.

And the mother of *Euryalus* in *Virgil*, to her son.

—Nec te tua sumera mater
 Produxi, pressive oculos, aut vulnera lavi,
 Veste tegens, tibi quam noctes festina diesque
 Urgebam, & tela curas solabat aniles.

We

64 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book II.

We saw, as unperceiv'd we took our stand,
The backward labours of her faithless hand.

125 Then urg'd, she perfects her illustrious toils;

A wond'rous monument of female wiles!

But you, oh Peers! and thou, oh Prince! give ear:
(I speak aloud, that ev'ry Greek may hear)

Dismiss the Queen; and if her fire approves,

130 Let him espouse her to the Peer she loves:

Bid instant to prepare the bridal train,

Nor let a race of Princes wait in vain.

Tho' with a grace divine her soul is blest,

And all *Minerva* breathes within her breast,

135 In wond'rous arts than woman more renown'd,

And more than woman with deep wisdom crown'd;

Tho' *Tyre* nor *Mycene* match her Name,

Nor great *Alcmena*, (the proud boasts of Fame)

Yet thus by heav'n adorn'd, by heav'n's decree

140 She shines with fatal excellence, to thee:

With thee, the bowl we drain, indulge the feast,

Till righteous heav'n reclaim her stubborn breast.

v. 140. *She shines with fatal excellence to thee.*] *Enstathius* observes, that *Antinous* in the opening of his Speech throws the fault upon *Penelope*, to engage the favour of the multitude: But being conscious that he had said things which *Penelope* would resent, he extols her in the conclusion of it. He ascribes an obstinacy of virtue to her, and by this double conduct endeavours to make both *Penelope* and the multitude his friends.

What

What tho' from pole to pole resounds her name!

The son's destruction waits the mother's fame:

145 For 'till she leaves thy court, it is decreed,

Thy bowl to empty, and thy flock to bleed.

While yet he speaks, *Telemachus* replies.

Ev'n Nature starts, and what ye ask denies.

Thus,

v. 147. *Telemachus's reply.*] *Telemachus* every where speaks with an openness and bravery of spirit; this speech is a testimony of it, as well as his former; he answers chiefly to the dismissal of *Penelope*, says it would be an offence against Heaven and Earth; and concludes with a vehemence of expression, and tells *Antinous* that such a word, *μῦθον*, shall never fall from his tongue.

The Critics have found fault with one part of the speech, as betraying a spirit of avarice and meanness in *Telemachus*:

How to Icarus, in the bridal hour,

Shall I, by waffe undone, refund the dow'r?

They think it unworthy of *Telemachus* to make the Dower of *Penelope* an argument against her dismissal, and consequently ascribe his detention of her, not to duty, but to covetousness. To take away this objection, they point the verses in a different manner, and place a stop after *ἀπορίμην*, and then the sense runs thus: "I cannot consent to dismiss her who bore me, and nurs'd me in my infancy, while her husband is absent, or perhaps dead; besides, hard would be the Punishment I should suffer, if I should voluntarily send away *Penelope* to *Icarus*."

Dacier dislikes this solution, and appeals to the customs of those Ages, to justify her opinion: If a son forc'd away his mother from his house, he was obliged to restore her dower, and all she brought in marriage to her husband: But if she retir'd voluntarily to engage in a second marriage, the dower remain'd with the son as lawful heir. This opinion of *Dacier* may be confirm'd from *Demosthenes* in his orations; *καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἀνδρὲς αὐτῆς τελευτήσαντος, ἀπολιποῦσα τὸν οἶκον, καὶ κοσμισαμένη τὴν προῖκα*. Afterwards upon the decease of her husband, leaving his family, and receiving back her portion, &c. The same Author adds, that the reason why the Suitors are so urgent to send away *Penelope*, is that she may chuse to marry some one of them, rather than return to *Icarus*;

Icarus;

66 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book II.

- Thus, shall I thus repay a mother's cares,
 170 Who gave me life, and nurs'd my infant years?
 While sad on foreign shores *Ulysses* treads,
 Or glides a ghost with unapparent shades,
 How to *Icarus* in the bridal hour
 Shall I, by waste undone, refund the dow'r?
 155 How from my father should I vengeance dread?
 How would my mother curse my hated head?
 And while in wrath, to vengeful Fiends she cries,
 How from their hell would vengeful Fiends arise?
 Abhor'd

ius; so that *Telemachus* only takes hold of their argument for her dismissal, in order to detain her. They address'd *Penelope* more for the sake of her riches than her beauty, (for she must be about forty years old) and he tells them, that if he sends her away against her consent, he must restore those riches, which they covet more than the person of *Penelope*. This I confess is very refin'd; and perhaps it may be sufficient to take off the objection of covetousness in *Telemachus*, to understand no more than what the words at the first view seem to imply, *viz.* an abhorrence of their riots, describ'd by *Telemachus* to have risen to such a degree as to have almost ruin'd his kingdom, and made their demands impossible. I see nothing unnatural or mean in this interpretation, especially if we remember that the prodigious disorders of his family enter into the essence of the Poem. The greater the disorders are, the greater are the sufferings of *Ulysses*.

v. 155, *How from my father should I vengeance dread?*] There is an ambiguity in the word Father; it may either signify *Icarus* or *Ulysses*, as *Eustathius* observes; but I think the context determines the person to be *Ulysses*; for *Telemachus* believes him to be yet living, and consequently might fear his vengeance, if he offer'd any indignity to *Penelope*.

v. 157. *And while in wrath to vengeful Fiends she cries,
 How from their hell would vengeful Fiends arise?*
 In the ninth *Iliad* we are told that the father of *Phanix* imprecated the Furies against his son,

My

Book II. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 67

- Abhorr'd by all, accurs'd my name would grow,
160 The earth's disgrace, and Humankind my foe.
If this displease, why urge ye here your stay?
Haste from the court, ye spoilers, haste away:
Waste in wild riot what your land allows,
There ply the early feast, and late carouse.
165 But if, to honour lost, 'tis still decreed
For you my bowl shall flow, my flocks shall bleed;
Judge and assert my right, impartial Jove!
By him, and all th' immortal host above,
(A sacred oath) if heav'n the pow'r supply,
170 Vengeance I vow, and for your wrongs ye die.

*My sire with curses loads my hated head,
And cries "Ye Furies! hav'n be his bed.
Infernal Jove, the vengeful Fiends below,
And ruthless Proserpine, confirm'd his vow.*

In the same book the Furies hear the curses of *Althea* upon her son,

*She beat the ground, and call'd the Pow'rs beneath,
On her own son to wreak her brother's death.
Hell heard her curses from the realms profound,
And the fell Fiends who walk the nightly round.*

These passages shew the opinion the Ancients had of the honour due from children to parents, to be such, that they believ'd there were Furies particularly commission'd to punish those who fail'd in that respect, and to fulfil the imprecations made against 'em by their offended parents. There is a greatness in this Idea, and it must have had an effect upon the obedience of the youth. We see *Telemachus* is full of the sense of it. *Dacier.*

With

68 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book II.

Wish that, two Eagles from a mountain's height
 By *Jove's* command direct their rapid flight ;
 Swift they descend with wing to wing conjoin'd,
 Stretch their broad plumes, and float upon the wind.
 175 Above th'assembled Peers they wheel on high,
 And clang their wings, and hovering beat the sky ;
 With ardent eyes the rival train they threat,
 And shrieking loud denounce approaching fate.
 They cuff, they tear, their cheeks and necks they rend,
 180 And from their plumes huge drops of blood descend.
 Then sailing o'er the domes and tow'rs they fly,
 Full tow'rd the East, and mount into the sky.

v. 171, &c. *The Prodigy of the two Eagles.*] This prodigy is usher'd in very magnificently, and the verses are lofty and sonorous. The Eagles are *Ulysses* and *Telemachus*; By *Jove's* command they fly from a mountain's height: this denotes that the two Heroes are inspir'd by *Jupiter*, and come from the country to the destruction of the Suitors: The eagles fly with wing to wing conjoin'd; this shews, that they act in concert, and unity of councils: At first they float upon the wind; this implies the calmness and secrecy of the approach of those Heroes: At last they clang their wings, and hovering beat the skies; this shews the violence of the assault: With ardent eyes the rival train they threat. This, as the Poet himself interprets it, denotes the approaching fate of the Suitors. Then sailing o'er the domes and tow'rs they fly Full toward the East; this signifies that the Suitors alone are not doom'd to destruction, but that the men of *Ithaca* are involv'd in danger, as *Halitherses* interprets it.

Nor to the Great alone is death decreed ;
 We, and our guilty Ithaca must bleed.

See here the natural explication of this prodigy, which is very ingenious! *Enstathius, verbatim.*

The

The wond'ring Rivals gaze with cares oppress,
And chilling horrors freeze in every breast.

185 Till big with knowledge of approaching woes

The Prince of Augurs, *Halitherses*, rose:

Prescient he view'd th'aerial tracks, and drew

A sure presage from ev'ry wing that flew.

Ye sons (he cry'd) of *Ithaca* give ear,

190 Hear all! but chiefly you, oh Rivals! hear.

Destruction sure o'er all your heads impends;

Ulysses comes, and death his steps attends.

Nor to the Great alone is death decreed;

We, and our guilty *Ithaca* must bleed.

195 Why cease we then the wrath of heav'n to stay?

Be humbled all, and lead, ye Great! the way.

For lo! my words no fancy'd woes relate:

I speak from science, and the voice is Fate:

When great *Ulysses* fought the *Phrygian* shores

200 To shake with war proud *Ilion's* lofty tow'rs,

Deeds then undone my faithful tongue foretold;

Heav'n seal'd my words, and you those deeds behold.

I see (I cry'd) his woes, a countless train;

I see his friends o'erwhelm'd beneath the main;

How

v. 203. *I see (I cry'd) his woes ————*
I see his friends o'erwhelm'd, &c.]

76 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book II.

- 205 How twice ten years from shore to shore he roams;
 Now twice ten years are past, and now he comes!
 To whom *Eurymachus*:—Fly Dotard, fly!
 With thy wise dreams, and fables of the sky.
 Go prophesy at home; thy sons advise;
- 210 Here thou art sage in vain—I better read the skies.
 Unnumber'd Birds glide thro' th' aerial way,
 Vagrants of air, and unforeboding stray.
 Cold in the tomb, or in the deeps below
Ulysses lies: oh wert thou laid as low!
- 215 Then would that busy head no broils suggest,
 Nor fire to rage *Telemachus's* breast.

In three lines (observes *Enstathius*) the Poet gives us the whole *Odyssey* in Miniature : And it is wonderful to think, that so plain a subject should produce such variety in the process of it. *Aristotle* observes the simplicity of *Homer's* platform; which is no more than this: A Prince is absent from his country; *Neptune* destroys his companions; in his absence his family is disorder'd by many Princes that address his wife, and plot against the life of his only son, but at last after many storms he returns, punishes the Suitors, and re-establishes his affairs: This is all that is essential to the Poem, the rest of it is made up of Episodes. And yet with what miracles of Poetry (*speciosa miracula*, as *Horace* styles them,) has he furnish'd out his Poem?

v. 207. *The speech of Eurymachus.*] It has been observ'd, that *Homer* is the father of Oratory as well as Poetry; and it must be confess'd, that there is not any one branch of it that is not to be found in his Poetry. The Invektive, Persuasive, Ironical, &c. may all be gather'd from it. Nothing can be better adapted to the purpose than this speech of *Eurymachus*: He is to decry the credit of the predictions of *Halitherses*: he derides, he threatens, and describes him as a venal Prophet. He is speaking to the multitude, and endeavours to bring *Halitherses* into contempt, and in order to it he uses him contemptuously.

From

Book II. *HOMER's ODYSSEY.* 71

- From him some bribe thy venal tongue requires,
And Int'rest, not the God, thy voice inspires.
His guide-less youth, if thy experienc'd age
20 Mislead fallacious into idle rage,
Vengeance deserv'd thy malice shall repress,
And but augment the wrongs thou would'st redress,
Telemachus may bid the Queen repair
To great *Icarus*, whose paternal care
25 Will guide her passion, and reward her choice,
With wealthy dow'r, and bridal gifts of price.
'Till she retires, determin'd we remain,
And both the Prince and Augur threat in vain:
His pride of words, and thy wild dream of fate,
30 Move not the brave, or only move their hate.
Threat on, oh Prince! elude the bridal day,
Threat on, 'till all thy stores in waste decay.
True, *Greece* affords a train of lovely dames,
In wealth and beauty worthy of our flames:
35 But never from this nobler suit we cease;
For wealth and beauty less than virtue please.
To whom the Youth. Since then in vain I tell
My num'rous woes, in silence let them dwell.

But

72 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book II.

But heav'n, and all the *Greeks*, have heard my wrongs:

240 To heav'n, and all the *Greeks*, redress belongs.

Yet this I ask (nor be it ask'd in vain)

A bark to waft me o'er the rolling main;

The realms of *Pyle* and *Sparta* to explore,

And seek my royal fire from shore to shore:

245 If, or to *Fame* his doubtful fate be known,

Or to be learn'd from *Oracles* alone?

If yet he lives, with patience I forbear

'Till the fleet hours restore the circling year;

But if already wand'ring in the train

250 Of empty shades, I measure back the main;

Plant the fair column o'er the mighty dead,

And yield his comfort to the nuptial bed.

v. 239. — all the *Greeks* have heard my wrongs.] It is necessary for the Reader to carry in his mind, that this Assembly consists not only of the Peers, but of the People of *Ithaca*: For to the People *Telemachus* here appeals.

It is evident, that the place of the Assembly was at least open to the Air in the upper parts; for otherways how should the Eagles be visible to the Suitors? and so very plainly as to be discovered to threat them with their eyes? There was no doubt a place set apart for Council, usually in the market: For *Telemachus* is said to seat himself in his father's throne, in the beginning of this book: But *Ulysses* had been absent twenty years; and therefore it is evident, that his throne had stood in the same place for the space of twenty years. It is past contradiction, that in *Athens* and other cities of *Greece* there were *Βουλευτήρια*, public Halls for the consultation of affairs.

He ceas'd; and while abash'd the Peers attend,

Mentor arose, *Ulysses'* faithful friend:

255 [When fierce in arms he fought the scenes of war,

" My friend (he cry'd) my palace be thy care;

" Years roll'd on years my god-like fire decay;

" Guard thou his age, and his behests obey.]

Stern as he rose, he cast his eyes around

260 That flash'd with rage; and as he spoke, he frown'd:

O never, never more! let King be just,

Be mild in pow'r, or faithful to his trust!

Let Tyrants govern with an iron rod,

Oppress, destroy, and be the scourge of God;

v. 254. *Mentor* arose, *Ulysses'* faithful friend.] The name of *Mentor* is another instance of the gratitude of our Poet's temper, it being the same which belong'd to a friend of his by whom he was entertain'd in *Ithaca*, during a defluxion on his eyes which seiz'd him in his voyages: and at whose house he is said to have laid the plan of this Poem. This character of *Mentor* is well sustain'd by his speech, and by the assistance he gratefully gives to young *Telemachus* on all occasions.

v. 258. *Guard thou my Sir, and his behests obey.*] The original says only, "Obey the old man." *Eustathius* rightly determines, that the expression means *Laertes*. The Poet loses no opportunity of giving *Ulysses* an excellent character; this is as necessary as continually to repeat the disorders of the Suitors.

—————*Servetur ad immon*
Qualis ab incerto processeris, & sibi constet.

This conduct contributes admirably to the design of the Poem; and when the Poet in the unravelling of his Fable comes to reward and punish the chief actors, we acknowledge his justice in the death of the Suitors, and re-establishment of *Ulysses*.

VOL. I.

E

Since

74 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book II.

- 265 Since he who like a father held his rein,
 So soon forgot, was just and mild in vain!
 True, while my friend is griev'd, his griefs I share;
 Yet now the Rivals are my smallest care:
 They, for the mighty mischiefs they devise,
 270 Ere long shall pay ~~their~~ their forfeit lives the price.
 But against you, ye *Greeks*! ye coward train,
 Gods! how my soul is mov'd with just disdain?
 Dumb ye all stand, and not one tongue affords
 His injur'd Prince the little aid of words.
- 275 While yet he spoke, *Leocritus* rejoyn'd:
 O pride of words, and arrogance of mind!
 Would'st thou to rise in arms the *Greeks* advise?
 Join all your pow'rs! in arms, ye *Greeks*, arise!
 Yet would your pow'rs in vain our strength oppose;
- 280 The valiant few o'ermatch an host of foes.
 Should great *Ulysses* stern appear in arms,
 While the bowl circles, and the banquet warms;

Tho'

v. 282. *While the bowl circles, and the banquet warms.*] The original is not without obscurity: it says, *οἱ ποτὶ Δαρτὶ*; or, in the time of the banquet. *Enstathius* interprets it, *τὴν αἶν σπαρτὴν ἐν τῷ αἶν*, *The Wine as it were fighting on their side*; and this agrees with what follows.

The design of this speech is to deter the people of *Ithaca* from rising in the cause of *Ulysses*: *Mentor* speaks justly; *Leocritus* insolently: *Mentor* sets before them the worth of *Ulysses*; *Leocritus* the power of the Suitors: *Mentor* speaks like a brave man; *Leocritus*

Book II. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 75

Tho' to his breast his spouse with transport flies,
Torn from her breast, that hour, *Ulysses* dies.

285 But hence retreating to your domes repair;
To arm the vessel, *Mentor*! be thy care,
And *Haliherfes*! thine: be each his friend;
Ye lov'd the father: go, the son attend.
But yet, I trust, the boaster means to stay

290 Safe in the court, nor tempt the wat'ry way.

Then, with a rushing sound, th' Assembly bend
Diverse their steps: the rival rout ascend
The royal dome; while sad the Prince explores
The neighb'ring main, and sorrowing treads the shores.
There,

Leocritus (observes *Enslathius*) like a coward, who wanting true courage, flies to the assistance of wine to raise a false one.

Perhaps it may be objected, that there is not a sufficient distinction in the characters of the several Suitors; they are all describ'd as insolent voluptuaries. But tho' they agree in this general character, yet there is something distinguishing in the particular persons: Thus *Antinous* derides, *Eurymachus* covers villainy with mildness; *Antinous* is ever the foremost in outrage, *Eurymachus* generally his second: A greater distinction is neither necessary, nor possible to be represented. What the Poet is to describe, is the insolence of the Suitors, and the disorders they create in his family and kingdom; he is oblig'd to dwell upon these circumstances, because they are essential to his design: and consequently that general resemblance of their characters, is not a fault in the Poet.

V. 291. *Then, with a rushing sound, &c.*] The Assembly which was conven'd by *Telemachus*, is broke up in a riotous manner by *Leocritus*, who had no right to dissolve it. This agrees with the lawless state of the country in the absence of its King, and shews (says *Enslathius*) that the Suitors had usurp'd the chief Authority.

76 HOMER's ODYSSEY. Book II.

- 295 There, as the waters o'er his hands he shed,
 The royal suppliant to *Minerva* pray'd,
 O Goddess! who descending from the skies
 Vouchsaf'd thy presence to my wond'ring eyes,
 By whose commands the raging deeps I trace,
 300 And seek my fire thro' storms and rolling seas!
 Hear from thy heav'ns above, oh warrior-maid!
 Descend once more, propitious to my aid.
 Without thy presence vain is thy command;
 Greece, and the rival train thy voice withstand.
 305 Indulgent to his pray'r, the Goddess took
 Sage *Mentor's* form, and thus like *Mentor* spake,
 O Prince, in early youth divinely wise,
 Born, the *Ulysses* of thy age to rise!
 If to the son the father's worth descends,
 310 O'er the wide waves success thy ways attends:

There is a fine contrast between the behaviour of *Telemachus* and that of the Suitors. They return to repeat their disorders and debauches; *Telemachus* retires to supplicate the Goddess of Wisdom, to assist him in his enterprizes. Thus the Poet raises the character of *Telemachus*; he has shew'd him to be a youth of a brave spirit, a good Speaker, and here represents him as a person of piety.

v. 307. *The Speech of Minerva.*] This speech of *Minerva* is suited to encourage a young man to imitate the virtue of his father, and not to suffer himself to be overcome by any appearance of difficulties. She sets his father before his eyes, and tells him, there was never any danger which he durst not encounter; if he should suffer himself to be discouraged, he would prove himself an unworthy son of a brave Father. *Dacier. Enstathius.*

To

Book II. *HOMER'S ODYSSEY.* 77

To tread the walks of death he stood prepar'd,
And what he greatly thought, he nobly dar'd.
Were not wise sons descendant of the wise,
And did not Heroes from brave Heroes rise,

315 Vain were my hopes : few sons attain the praise
Of their great fires, and most their fires disgrace.
But since thy veins paternal virtue fires,
And all *Penelope* thy soul inspires,
Go, and succeed ! the rival's aims despise,

320 For never, never, wicked man was wise.
Blind they rejoice, tho' now, ev'n now they fall;
Death hastes amain : one hour o'erwhelms them all !
And lo, with speed we plow the wat'ry way ;
My pow'r shall guard thee, and my hand convey :

325 The winged vessel studious I prepare,
Thro' seas and realms companion of thy care.
Thou to the court ascend ; and to the shores
(When night advances) bear the naval stores ;
Bread, that decaying man with strength supplies,

330 And gen'rous wine, which thoughtful sorrow flies.
Mean-while the Mariners by my command
Shall speed aboard, a valiant chosen band.
Wide o'er the bay, by vessel vessel rides ;
The best I chuse, to waft thee o'er the tides.

335 She spoke: to his high dome the Prince returns,
And as he moves, with royal anguish mourns.
'Twas riot all, among the lawless train;
Boar bled by boar, and goat by goat lay slain.
Arriv'd, his hand the gay *Antinous* preßt;

340 And thus deriding, with a smile addrest.
Grieve not, oh daring Prince! that noble heart:
Ill suits gay youth the stern heroic part.
Indulge the genial hour, unbend thy soul,
Leave thought to Age, and drain the flowing bowl.

345 Studious to ease thy grief, our care provides
The bark, to waft thee o'er the swelling tides.

Is this (returns the Prince) for mirth a time?
When lawless gluttons riot, mirth's a crime;

v. 341. *Antinous's speech.*] This speech must be understood ironically: *ἵππον τι ἄριστον* is us'd as before, and has relation to the preceding harangues of *Telemachus* to the people, and his intended voyage; by way of derision *Antinous* bids him not trouble his brave Spirit in contriving any more Orations, or in any bold attempt to find out *Ulysses*; or to act the Orator, or Heroe's part.

The Critics have almost generally condemn'd these pieces of gayety and raillery, as unworthy of heroic Poetry: if ever they are proper, they must be so in the mouths of these Suitors; persons of no serious, or noble characters: Mirth, wine, and feasting is their constant employment; and consequently if they fall into absurdities, they act suitably to their characters. *Milton*, the best and greatest imitator of *Homer*, has follow'd him unworthily in this respect; I mean, has debased even this low raillery into greater lowness, by playing upon words and syllables. But in this place the raillery is not without its effect, by shewing the utmost contempt of *Telemachus*; and surely it is the lowest degree of calamity to be at once oppress'd and despis'd.

The

The luscious wines dishonour'd lose their taste,

350 The song is noise, and impious is the feast.

Suffice it to have spent with swift decay

The wealth of Kings, and made my youth a prey,

But now the wise instructions of the sage,

And manly thoughts inspir'd by manly age,

355 Teach me to seek redress for all my woe.

Here, or in Pyle.——in Pyle or here, your foe:

Deny your vessels; ye deny in vain;

A private voyager I pass the main.

Free breathe the winds, and free the billows flow,

360 And where on earth I live, I live your foe.

He spoke and frown'd, nor longer deign'd to stay,
Sternly his hand withdrew, and strode away.

Mean time, o'er all the dome, they quaff, they feast,
Derisive taunts were spread from guest to guest,

365 And each in jovial mood his mate address'd.

Tremble ye not, oh friends! and coward fly,

Doom'd by the stern *Telemachus* to dye?

To Pyle or Sparta to demand supplies,

Big with revenge, the mighty warrior flies:

Or

v. 368. To Pyle or Sparta to demand supplies.] It is observable, says *Enstathius*, that the Poet had in his choice several expedients to bring about the destruction of the Suitors, but he rejects them, and chuses the most difficult method, out of reverence to truth, being unwilling to falsify the Histories of *Sparta* and *Pyles*. This

80 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book II.

370 Or comes from *Ephyre* with poisons fraught,
And kills us all in one tremendous draught?

Or who can say (his gamesome mate replies)
But while the dangers of the deeps he tries,
He, like his fire, may sink depriv'd of breath,

375 And punish us unkindly by his death?
What mighty labours would he then create,
To seize his treasures, and divide his state,
The royal Palace to the Queen convey,
Or him she blesses in the bridal day!

380 Mean-time the lofty rooms the Prince surveys,
Where lay the treasures of th' *Ithacian* race:

Here

has a double effect; it furnishes the Poet with a series of noble incidents; and also gives an air of probability to the story of *Ulysses* and *Telemachus*.

v. 378. *The royal Palace to the Queen convey.*] The Suitors allot the Palace to *Penelope*: it being, says *Enstathius*, the only thing that they cannot consume; and adds, that the expression of the Suitors concerning the labour they should undergo in dividing the substance of *Ulysses*, shews the wealth and abundance of that Heroe. *Dacier* has found out an allusion between *φόνος* in the first speech, and *μόνος* in the second; they differing only in one letter: She calls this a beauty, which she laments she cannot preserve in her translation. She is the only Commentator that ever was quick-sighted enough to make the discovery. The words have no relation; they stand at a sufficient distance; and I believe *Homer* would have thought such trifling unworthy of his Poetry. So that all the honour which accrues from that observation must be ascrib'd (in this case, as in many others) to the Commentator, and not the Author.

v. 381. *Where lay the treasures of th' Ithacian race.*] Such passages as these have ever furnish'd Critics with matter of raillery: They think such household cares unworthy of a King, and that this conduct suits better with vulgar persons of less fortune. I confess,

Book II. *HOMER'S ODYSSEY.* 81

Here ruddy brags and gold refulgent blaz'd;
 There polish'd chests embroider'd vestures grac'd;
 Here jars of oil breath'd forth a rich perfume;
 385 There casks of wine in rows adorn'd the dome.
 (Pure flav'rous wine, by Gods in bounty giv'n,
 And worthy to exalt the feasts of heav'n.)
 Untouch'd they stood, 'till his long labours o'er
 The great *Ulysses* reach'd his native shore.
 390 A double strength of bars secur'd the gates:
 Fast by the door the wife *Euryclæa* waits;
Euryclæa, who, great *Ops*! thy lineage shar'd,
 And watch'd all night, all day; a faithful guard.

confess, such descriptions now would be ridiculous in a Poet, because unsuitable to our manners. But if we look upon such passages as pictures and exact representations of the old world, the Reader will find a sensible pleasure in them.

It is a true observation, that the *Iliad* is chiefly suitable to the condition of Kings and Heroes; and consequently fill'd with circumstances in which the greatest part of mankind can have no concern or interest: The *Odyssey* is of more general use; the story of it is a series of calamities, which concern every man, as every man may feel them. We can bring the sufferings of *Ulysses* in some degree home to our selves, and make his condition our own; but what private person can ever be in the circumstances of *Agamemnon* or *Achilles*? What I would infer from this is, that the Reader ought not to take offence at any such descriptions, which are only mean as they differ from the fashions of the latter ages. In the *Iliad*, *Achilles* when he acts in the common offices of life, and not as an Heroe, is liable to the same objection. But if the manners of the antient ages be consider'd, we shall be reconcil'd to the actions of the ancient Heroes; and consequently to *Homer*.

82 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book II.

To whom the Prince. O thou, whose guardian care

395 Nurs'd the most wretched King that breathes the air!

Untouch'd and sacred may these vessels stand,

'Till great *Ulysses* views his native land.

But by thy care twelve urns of wine be fill'd,

Next these in worth, and fister those urns be seal'd;

400 And twice ten measures of the choicest flour

Prepar'd, ere yet descends the evening hour.

For when the fav'ring shades of night arise,

And peaceful slumbers close my mother's eyes,

Me from our coast shall spreading sails convey,

405 To seek *Ulysses* thro' the wat'ry way.

While yet he spoke, she fill'd the walls with cries,

And tears ran trickling from her aged eyes.

Oh whither, whither flies my son? she cry'd,

To realms, that rocks and roaring seas divide?

V. 394. ———Oh thou, whose guardian care
Nurs'd the most wretched King.]

Euryclia was not properly the Nurse of *Telemachus*, but of *Ulysses*; so that she is call'd so not in a strict sense, but as one concern'd in his education from his infancy, and as a general appellation of honour. *Telemachus* here reserves the best wines for *Ulysses*; a lesson, (observes *Enslathius*) that even in the smallest matters we ought to pay a deference to our parents. These occasional and seemingly-trivial circumstances are not without their use, if not as poetical ornaments, yet as moral instructions.

- 410 In foreign lands thy father's days decay'd,
 And foreign lands contain the mighty dead.
 The wat'ry way ill-fated if thou try,
 All, all must perish, and by fraud you die!
 Then stay, my child! storms beat, and rolls the main;
 415 Oh beat those storms, and roll the seas in vain!
 Far hence (reply'd the Prince) thy fears be driv'n:
 Heav'n calls me forth; these counsels are of heav'n.
 But by the pow'rs that hate the perjur'd, swear,
 To keep my voyage from the royal ear,
 420 Nor uncompell'd the dang'rous truth betray,
 Till twice six times descends the lamp of day:
 Lest the sad tale a mother's life impair,
 And grief destroy what time a while would spare;
 Thus he. The matron with uplifted eyes
 425 Attests th' all-seeing Sovereign of the skies.

v. 421. *"Till twice six times descends the lamp of day."* It may be demanded how it was probable, (if possible) that the departure of *Telemachus* could be conceal'd twelve days from the knowledge of so fond a mother as *Penelope*? It must be allow'd, that this would not be possible except in a time of such great disorder as the Suitors created: *Penelope* confin'd herself almost continually within her own apartment, and very seldom appear'd publicly; so that there is no improbability in this relation. *Dacier*.

Estiathius makes a criticism upon the words ἀπομύνας and ἐπομύνας, the former is used negatively, the latter affirmatively; namely, the former in swearing *not to perform* a thing, the latter *to perform* it.

84 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book II.

Then studious she prepares the choicest flour,
The strength of wheat, and wines, an ample store.
While to the rival train the Prince returns,
The martial Goddess with impatience burns;

430 Like thee, *Telemachus*, in voice and size,
With speed divine from street to street she flies,
She bids the Mariners prepar'd to stand,
When Night descends, embodied on the strand.
Then to *Noemon* swift she runs, she flies,

435 And asks a bark: the chief a bark supplies.

And now, declining with his sloping wheels,
Down sunk the Sun behind the western hills.
The Goddess shov'd the vessel from the shores,
And stow'd within its womb the naval stores.

v. 432. *She bids the Mariners, &c.*] It is probable that this passage of *Minerva* preparing the Mariners, &c. is thus to be understood: The men of *Ithaca*, retaining in memory the speech of *Telemachus*, and believing that what he then said, and now requests, was agreeable to justice; and having as it were his image graven upon their hearts; voluntarily resolve to lend him assistance: So that *Minerva* is to be taken allegorically, to imply that it was every person's own Reason that induced him to assist *Telemachus*. *Eufrathius*.

v. 435. *Noemon—the Bark supplies.*] It may be ask'd why this particularity is necessary, and may it not be thought that such a little circumstance is insignificant? The answer is, that a great deal depends upon this particularity; no less than the discovery of the voyage of *Telemachus* to the Suitors; and consequently, whatever the Suitors act in order to intercept him takes its rise from this little incident; the fountain is indeed small, but a large stream of Poetry flows from it.

Full

440 Full in the openings of the spacious main
It rides; and now descends the sailor train.

Next, to the court, impatient of delay
With rapid step the Goddess urg'd her way:
There ev'ry eye with slumbrous chains she bound,
445 And dash'd the flowing goblet to the ground.

Drowzy they rose, with heavy fumes oppress'd,
Reel'd from the palace, and retir'd to rest.

Then thus, in *Mentor's* rev'rend form array'd,
Spoke to *Telemachus* the martial Maid.

450 Lo! on the seas prepar'd the vessel stands;
Th' impatient mariner thy speed demands,
Swift as she spoke, with rapid pace she leads.
The footsteps of the Deity he treads.

v. 444. *Thence ev'ry eye with slumbrous chains she bound.*] The words in the original are *aidon* and *urnos*, which are not to be taken for being *asleep*, but *drowzy*; this is evident from the usage of *xabaidon*, in the conclusion of the first book of the *Iliad*, where the signification has been mistaken by most translators: They make *Jupiter* there to be asleep; tho' two lines afterwards, in the second book, *Homer* expressly says,

*Th' Immortals slumber'd on their thrones above:
All, but the ever-waking eyes of Jove.*

It may be ask'd how *Minerva* can be said to occasion this drowziness in the Suitors, and make them retire sooner than usual? *Enstathius* replies, that the person who furnish'd the wine supply'd it in greater quantities than ordinary, thro' which wine they contracted a drowziness: In this sense *Minerva*, or Wisdom, may be said to assist the designs of *Telemachus*.

Swift

Swift to the shore they move: Along the strand

455 The ready vessel rides, the sailors ready stand.

He bids them bring their stores: th' attending train

Load the tall bark, and launch into the main.

The Prince and Goddess to the stern ascend;

To the strong stroke at once the rowers bend.

460 Full from the West she bids fresh breezes blow;

The sable billows foam and rear below.

The Chief his orders gives; th' obedient band

With due observance wait the chief's commands;

With speed the mast they rear, with speed unbind

465 The spacious sheet, and stretch it to the wind.

High o'er the roaring waves the spreading sails

Bow the tall mast, and swell before the gales;

The crooked keel the parting surge divides,

And to the stern retreating roll the tides.*

v. 460. *She bids fresh breezes blow.*] This also is an allegory, and implies that the sailors had the experience and art to guide the ship before the winds; but Poetry, that delights to raise every circumstance, exalts it into the marvellous, and ascribes it to the Goddess of Wisdom. *Enslathins.*

v. 464. *With speed the mast they rear, &c.*] It is observable, that Homer never passes by an opportunity of describing the sea, or a ship under sail; (and in many other places, as well as in this, he dwells largely upon it:) I take the reason to be, not only because it furnish'd him with variety of poetical images, but because he himself having made frequent voyages, had a full Idea of it, and consequently was delighted with it: This is evident from his conduct in the *Iliad*, where variety of allusions and similitudes are drawn from the Sea, and are not the smallest ornaments of his Poetry.

And

- 470 And now they ship their oars, and crown with wine
The holy Goblet to the pow'rs divine:
Imploring all the Gods that reign above,
But chief, the blue-ey'd Progeny of Jove.
Thus all the night they stem the liquid way,
475 And end their voyage with the morning ray.

v. 470.

— And crown with wine

The holy Goblet to the Pow'rs divine.]

This custom of libations was frequent upon all solemn occasions, before meat, before sleep, voyages, journeys; and in all religious rites, sacrifices, &c. They were always made with wine, pure and unmix'd, whence *ἀραιον* is a word frequent in ancient Authors. Sometimes they used mixed wine in Sacrifices; but *Enstasius* says, that this mixture was of wine with wine, and not of wine with water; hence came the distinction of *ἑσπονον*, and *ἀσπονον*, the unlawful and lawful libation; wine unmix'd was lawful, the mix'd unlawful. *Homer* in this place uses *ἐπιστήας κρητῆρας*, or *Goblets crown'd with wine*; that is, fill'd 'till the wine stood above the brim of the Goblet: they esteem'd it an irreverence to the Gods not to fill the cups full, for then only they esteem'd the libation *whole and perfect*, *ὅλον καὶ τέλειον*.

This Book takes up the space of one day and one night: it opens with the morning; the speeches in the Council, with the preparations for the voyage of *Telemachus*, are the subject of the day; and the voyage is finish'd by the next morning. By this last circumstance we may learn that *Ithaca* was distant from *Pylos* but one night's voyage, nay something less, there being some time spent after the setting of the Sun, in carrying the provisions from the Palace to the vessel.

The book consists chiefly in the speeches of *Telemachus* and his friends, against those of the Suitors. It shews the great judgment of the Poet in chusing this method: hence we see the causes preceding the effects; and know from what spring every action flow'd: we are never at a loss for a reason for every incident; the speeches are as it were the ground-work upon which he builds all that relates to the adventures of *Telemachus*.

In

88 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book II.

In the *Iliad*, after the dissolution of the Council in the first book, and the dissention between *Agamemnon* and *Achilles*, we immediately see upon what hinge the fable turns. So in the *Odyssey*, after the Poet has laid before us the warm debates between the Suitors and *Telemachus*, we immediately expect them to act as enemies: The war is declar'd, and we become judges as well as spectators of the scenes of action. Thus *Homer* adds the perspicuity of History to the ornaments of Poetry.



THE



*Telemachus arrives at Pylos
conducted by Minerva.*

THE
THIRD BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.



The A R G U M E N T.

The Interview of *Telemachus* and *Nestor*.

Telemachus, guided by Pallas in the shape of Mentor, arrives in the morning at Pylos; where Nestor and his sons are sacrificing on the sea-shore to Neptune. Telemachus declares the occasion of his coming, and Nestor relates what past in their return from Troy, how their fleets were separated, and he never since heard of Ulysses. They discourse concerning the death of Agamemnon, the revenge of Orestes, and the injuries of the Suitors. Nestor advises him to go to Sparta and enquire further of Menelaus. The sacrifice ending with the night, Minerva vanishes from them in the form of an Eagle: Telemachus is lodged in the Palace. The next morning they sacrifice a Bullock to Minerva, and Telemachus proceeds on his journey to Sparta, attended by Pisistratus.

The Scene lyes on the Sea-shore of *Pylos*.

T H E

T H E
T H I R D B O O K
O F T H E
O D Y S S E Y.

TH E sacred Sun, above the waters rais'd,
Thro' Heav'n's eternal, brazen portals blaz'd;
And wide o'er earth diffus'd his chearing ray,
To Gods and men to give the golden day.

Now

The scene is now remov'd from *Ithaca* to *Pylos*, and with it a new vein of Poetry is opened: Instead of the riots of the Suitors, we are entertain'd with the wisdom and piety of *Nestor*. This and the following book are a kind of Supplement to the *Iliad*; the nature of Epic Poetry requires that something should be left to the imagination of the Reader, nor is the picture to be entirely drawn at full length. *Homer* therefore, to satisfy our curiosity, gives an account of the fortunes of those great men, who made so noble a figure at the siege of *Troy*. This conduct also shews his art: Variety gives life and delight; and it is much more necessary in Epic than in Comic or Tragic Poetry sometimes to shift the Scenes, to diversify and embellish the story. But as on the stage the Poet ought not to step at once from one part of the world to a too remote country, (for this destroys credibility, and

the

92 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book III.

Now on the coast of *Pyle* the vessel falls,

Before old *Neleus'* venerable walls.

There, suppliant to the Monarch of the flood,

At nine green Theatres the *Pylians* flood,

Each

the auditor cannot fancy himself this minute here, and the next a thousand miles distant) so in Epic Poetry, every removal must be within the degrees of probability. We have here a very easy transition; the Poet carries his Heroe no further than he really might sail in the compass of time he allots for his voyage. If he had still dwelt upon the disorders of the Suitors without interruption, he must grow tiresome; but he artfully breaks the thread of their story with beautiful incidents and Episodes, and reserves the further recital of their disorders for the end of his Poem: By this method we sit down with fresh appetite to the entertainment, and rise at last not cloy'd, but satisfied.

v. 2. *Thro' Heaven's eternal, brazen portals*—] The original calls Heaven *πολλύχαλκον*, or *bræzen*; the reason of it arises either from the Palaces of the Gods being built of brass by *Vulcan*; or rather the word implies no more than the Stability of Heaven, which for the same reason is in other places call'd *σιδ' ἔργον*, or *fram'd of iron*. Eustathius.

v. 8. *At nine green Theatres.*] It may be ask'd why the Poet is so very particular as to mention that the *Pylians* were divided into nine assemblies; and may it not seem a circumstance of no importance? Eustathius answers from the Antients, that there were nine cities subject to the power of *Nestor*: five in *Pyles*, the rest in *Bæotia*; the Poet therefore allots one Bank or Theatre to every city, which consisted of 500 men, the whole number amounting to 4500: These cities furnish'd the like complement of men to *Nestor* for the war at *Troy*: He sail'd in ninety vessels, and allowing fifty men to each vessel, they amount to that number. Hence it appears that this was a national sacrifice, every city furnish'd nine bulls, and by consequence the whole nation were partakers of it.

v. Ibid. *The sacrifice of the Pylians.*] 'Tis was a very solemn sacrifice of the *Pylians*; How comes it then to pass, that *Homer* passes it over in one line? Eustathius answers, that the occasion disallows a longer description, and *Homer* knows when to speak, and when to be silent. He chuses to carry on the adventures of *Telemachus*, rather than amuse himself in descriptions that contribute

Book III. *HOMER'S ODYSSEY.* 93

Each held five hundred, (a deputed train)

10 At each, nine oxen on the sand lay slain.

They taste the entrails, and the altars load

With smoaking thighs, an offering to the God!

Full for the port the *Ithacensians* stand,

And furl their sails, and issue on the land.

15 *Telemachus* already prest the shore;

Not first, the Pow'r of Wisdom march'd before,

And ere the sacrificing throng he join'd,

Admonish'd thus his well-attending mind.

Proceed, my son! this youthful shame expel;

20 An honest business never blush to tell,

To learn what fates thy wretched fire detain;

We past the wide, immeasurable main.

Meet then the Senior far renown'd for sense,

With rev'rent awe, but decent confidence:

25 Urge him with truth to frame his fair replies;

And sure he will: For Wisdom never lies.

Oh

bute nothing to the story; he finds a time of more leisure in the latter part of this book, and there he describes it at length.

They taste the entrails; that is, every person eat a small portion of the sacrifice, and by this method every person became partaker of it.

There is nothing in *Homer* that shews where this sacrifice was offer'd, whether in a Temple, or in the open air. But *Eustathius* tells us from *Strabo*, that it was in the Temple of *Samian Neptune*, *ἐν ἱερῷ Σαμίου νεοῦντος.*

v. 25. Urge him with truth to frame his fair replies;

And sure he will: For Wisdom never lies.]

This

24 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book III.

Oh tell me, *Mentor* ! tell me, faithful guide,
(The youth with prudent modesty reply'd)

How shall I meet, or how accost the Sage,

30 Unskill'd in speech, nor yet mature of age?

Awful th'approach, and hard the task appears,

To question wisely men of riper years.

To whom the martial Goddess thus rejoin'd.

Search, for some thoughts, thy own suggesting mind;

35 And others, dictated by heav'nly pow'r,

Shall rise spontaneous in the needful hour.

For nought unprosperous shall thy ways attend,

Born with good omens, and with heav'n thy friend.

She

This sentiment is truly noble, and as nobly expressed: the simplicity of the diction corresponds with that of the thought. *Homer* in many places testifies the utmost abhorrence of a Lye. This verse is twice repeated in the present book, as well as in some others; and nothing can be stronger in the same view than that of *Achilles* in the 9th *Iliad*,

Who dares think one thing, and another tell,
My heart detests him as the gates of hell.

v. 38. *Born with good omens, and with heav'n thy friend.* There is some obscurity in the Greek expression, and the ancient Critics have made it more obscure by their false interpretations; they imagine that the Poet only meant to say that *Telemachus* was the legitimate son of *Penelope* and *Ulysses*. *Enslathins*.

Dacier very justly condemns this explication, as unworthy of *Homer*; and gives us a more plain and natural interpretation: viz. "You were not born in despite of the Gods, that is, you are well made, and of a good presence, you have good inclinations, and in a word, your birth is happy." She explains *κατὰ φύσιν* after the same manner: "You were not educated in despite of
" the

Book III. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 95

She spoke, and led the way with swiftest speed:

40 As swift, the youth pursu'd the way she led;

And join'd the band before the sacred fire,
Where sat, cæcompast with his sons, the Sire.

The youth of *Pylus*, some on pointed wood
Transfix'd the fragments, some prepar'd the food.

45 Infriendly throngs they gather to embrace

Their unknown guests, and at the banquet place.

Pisistratus was first, to grasp their hands,

And spread soft hides upon the yellow sands;

Along

"the Gods;" that is, "the Gods have blessed your education;" This explication seems to be just, and answers perfectly the design of *Minerva*; which was to give a decent assurance to *Telemachus*. You are a person, says the Goddess, of a good presence, and happy education, why then should you be ashamed to appear before *Nestor*?

v. 48. *And spread soft hides upon the yellow sands.*] It is with pleasure that I read such passages in an Author of so great antiquity, as are pictures of the simplicity of those heroic ages: It is the remark of *Eustathius*, that *Pisistratus* the son of a King does not seat these strangers upon purple Tapestry, or any other costly furniture, but upon the skins of beasts, that had nothing to recommend them but their softness; being spread upon the sand of the sea shores.

This whole passage pleases me extremely; there is a spirit of true Devotion, Morality and good Sense in it; and the decency of behaviour between *Nestor* and *Telemachus* is describ'd very happily: *Nestor* shews great benevolence to *Telemachus*; *Telemachus* great reverence to *Nestor*: the modesty of the one, and the humanity of the other, are worthy of our observation. We see the same picture of *Nestor* in the *Odyssey* that was drawn of him in the *Iliads*, with this only difference, that there he was a Counsellor of War, here he is painted in softer colours, ruling his people in peace, and diffusing a spirit of piety thro' his whole territories. He had now
surviv'd

96 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book III.

Along the shore th' illustrious pair he led,
 50 Where *Nestor* sat with youthful *Thrasymed*.
 To each a portion of the Feast he bore,
 And held the golden goblet foaming o'er;
 Then first approaching to the elder guest,
 The latent Goddess in these words address.
 55 Whoe'er thou art, whom fortune brings to keep
 These rites of *Neptune*, monarch of the deep,
 Thee first it fits, oh stranger! to prepare
 The due libation and the solemn pray'r:
 Then give thy friend to shed the sacred wine;
 60 Tho' much thy younger, and his years like mine,
 He too, I deem, implores the pow'rs divine:
 For all mankind alike require their grace,
 All born to want; a miserable race!

He spake, and to her hand preferr'd the bowl:
 65 A secret pleasure touch'd *Athena's* soul,
 To see the preference due to sacred age
 Regarded ever by the just and sage.
 Of Ocean's King she then implores the grace.
 Oh thou! whose arms this ample globe embrace,

surviv'd the war of *Troy* almost ten years; and the Gods reward
 the old age of this wise and religious Prince with peace and
 happiness,

Book III, *HOMER'S ODYSSEY.* 97

- 70 Fulfil our wish, and let thy glory shine
 On *Nestor* first, and *Nestor's* royal line ;
 Next grant the *Pylian* states their just desires,
 Pleas'd with their Hecatomb's ascending fires,
 Last deign *Telemachus* and me to bless,
- 75 And crown our voyage with desir'd success.
 Thus she; and having paid the rite divine,
 Gave to *Ulysses'* son the rosy wine.
 Suppliant he pray'd. And now the victims dress
 They draw, divide, and celebrate the feast.
- 80 The banquet done, the Narrative old man
 Thus mild, the pleasing conference began.
 Now, gentle guests! the genial banquet o'er,
 It fits to ask ye, what your native shore,
 And whence your race? on what adventure, say,
- 85 Thus far ye wander thro' the watry way?

v. 74. *Last, deign Telemachus and me to bless—*] Since *Minerva* here mentions the name of *Telemachus* in her prayer; how comes it to pass, that *Nestor* is at a loss to know *Telemachus*? *Minerva* sat close by *Nestor*; he must therefore be suppos'd to hear the prayer; and yet in the following lines he enquires who these strangers are? We can scarce imagine *Nestor* ignorant that the son of *Ulysses* was named *Telemachus*, there being so strict a friendship between *Nestor* and *Ulysses*. Perhaps therefore *Minerva* pray'd in secret mentally; or perhaps *Nestor* might not take notice of what was not address'd immediately to him, and consequently make enquiry about it for the greater certainty.

Relate,

98 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book III.

Relate, if business, or the thirst of gain
Engage your journey o'er the pathless main?
Where savage Pyrates seek thro' seas unknown
The lives of others, vent'rous of their own.

90 Urg'd by the precepts by the Goddess giv'n,
And fill'd with confidence infus'd from heav'n,
The Youth, whom *Pallas* destin'd to be wise
And fam'd among the sons of men, replies.
Enqu'rst thou, father! from what coast we came?

95 (Oh grace and glory of the *Grecian* name!)
From where high *Ithaca* o'erlooks the floods,
Brown with e'er-arching shades and pendent woods.

v. 86. *Relate, if business, or the thirst of gain, &c.*] If we form our images of persons and actions in ancient times, from the images of persons and actions in modern ages, we shall fall into great mistakes: Thus in the present passage, if we annex the same idea of Piracy, as it was practis'd three thousand years past, to Piracy as it is practis'd in our ages; what can be a greater affront than this enquiry of *Nestor*? But, says *Enslathins*, Piracy was formerly not only accounted lawful, but honourable. I doubt not but *Thucydides* had this passage in view, when he says, that the ancient Poets introduce men enquiring of those who frequent the sea, if they be Pyrates, as a thing no way ignominious. *Thucydides* tells us in the same place, that all those who liv'd on the sea-coast, or in the Islands, maintain'd themselves by frequent inroads upon unfortify'd towns, and if such pyracies were nobly perform'd, they were accounted glorious. *Herodotus* also writes, that many of the ancients, especially about *Thrace*, thought it ignominious to live by labouring the ground, but to live by piracy and plunder was esteem'd a life of honour. *Enslathins*.

Us

Book III. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 99

- 100 Us to these shores our filial duty draws,
A private sorrow, not a publick cause.
My fire I seek, where-e'er the voice of fame
Has told the glories of his noble name,
The great *Ulysses*; fam'd from shore to shore.
- 105 For valour much, for hardy suff'ring more.
Long time with thee before proud *Men's* wall
In arms he fought; with thee beheld her fall.
Of all the chiefs, this Heroe's fate alone
Has *Jove* reserv'd, unheard of, and unknown;
- 110 Whether in fields by hostile fury slain,
Or sunk by tempests in the gulphy main?
Of this to learn, oppress'd with tender fears
Lo at thy knee his suppliant son appears.
If or thy certain eye, or curious ear
- 115 Have learn't his fate, the whole dark story clear:
And oh! whate'er heav'n destin'd to betide
Let neither flatt'ry smooth, nor pity hide.
Prepar'd I stand: he was but born to try
The lot of man; to suffer, and to die.
- 120 Oh then, if ever thro' the ten years war
The wife, the good *Ulysses* claim'd thy care;
If e'er he join'd thy council, or thy sword,
True in his deed, and constant to his word;

100 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book III.

Far as thy mind thro' backward time can see,
Search all thy stores of faithful memory :
'Tis sacred truth I ask, and ask of thee.

125 To him experienc'd *Nestor* thus rejoin'd.
O friend! what sorrows dost thou bring to mind?
Shall I the long, laborious scene review,
And open all the wounds of *Greece* anew?
What toils by sea! where dark in quest of prey

130 Dauntless we rov'd; *Achilles* led the way:
What toils by land! where mixt in fatal fight
Such numbers fell, such Heroes sunk to night:
There *Ajax* great, *Achilles* there the brave,
There wife *Patroclus*, fill an early grave:

There

v. 125. *The speech of Nestor.*] *Eustathius* observes the modesty of *Nestor*: *Telemachus* had ascrib'd the fall of *Troy* in a great measure to *Nestor*; but *Nestor* speaks not in particular of himself, but is content with his share of glory in common with other warriors; he speaks in the plural number, and joins all the *Greeks*, as in the war, so in the glory of it. *Nestor* mentions the sufferings of the *Greeks* by sea, as well as by land, during the siege of *Troy*: To understand this, it is necessary to remember, that the *Greeks* made many expeditions against other places during the war, both by sea and land, as appears from many passages in the *Iliads*, particularly from what *Achilles* says in the ninth book.

v. 133. *There Ajax great, Achilles there the brave.*] I have observ'd, that the Poet inserts into the *Odyssey* several incidents that happen'd after the fall of *Troy*, and by that method agreeably diversifies his Poetry, and satisfies the curiosity of the Reader. *Eustathius* remarks here, that he gives a title of honour to all the Heroes he mentions, except only to *Achilles*. *Achilles* had been the occasion of the sufferings and death of many of the *Greeks* by his anger,

- 135 There too my son——ah once my best delight,
Once swift of foot, and terrible in fight,
In whom stern courage with soft virtue join'd,
A faultless body, and a blameless mind:
Antilochus——what more can I relate?
- 140 How trace the tedious series of our fate?
Not added years on years my task could close,
The long historian of my country's woes:
Back to thy native Islands might'st thou sail,
And leave half-heard the melancholy tale.
- 145 Nine painful years, on that detested shore
What stratagems we form'd, what toils we bore?
Still lab'ring on, 'till scarce at last we found
Great *Jove* propitious, and our conquest crown'd!
Far o'er the rest thy mighty father shin'd.
- 150 In wit, in prudence, and in force of mind.

Are

anger, and obstinacy in refusing to obey *Agamemnon*; therefore while *Nestor* is lamenting the calamities of the *Greeks*, he passes over *Achilles* without any honourable mention, who had so greatly added to their sufferings. But I think this remark chimerical: one may as well say *Achilles* needed no Epithet to distinguish him.

It is with pleasure I see the old man dwell upon the praise of *Antilochus*: The father enlarges upon the fame of the son; he gives him four epithets of glory; and while *Ajax* is only praised as a warrior, *Antilochus* is great and good, excellent in the standing fight, or swift to pursue an enemy. *Longinus* has observ'd upon the beauty of this passage.

v. 149. Far o'er the rest thy mighty father shin'd.] *Nestor* speaks of *Ulysses* as an inseparable friend; and it shews an excellent dis-

102 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book III.

Art thou the son of that illustrious sire?

With joy I grasp thee, and with love admire.

So like your voices, and your words so wise,

Who finds thee younger must consult his eyes,

155 Thy Sire and I were one; nor vary'd aught

In publick sentence, or in private thought;

Alike to Council or th' Assembly came,

With equal souls, and sentiments the same.

But when (by wisdom won) proud *Ilion* burn'd,

160 And in their ships the conqu'ring *Greeks* return'd;

'Twas God's high will the victors to divide,

And turn th' event, confounding human pride;

Some he destroy'd, some scatter'd as the dust,

(Not all were prudent, and not all were just)

165 Then *Discord*, sent by *Pallas* from above,

Stern Daughter of the great Avenger *Jove*,

The

position in them both, to be rivals, and yet without envy. But the art of *Nestor* is remarkable; he first gives the character to *Ulysses* of being superior in wisdom to all the *Greeks*; and yet at last he finds a way secretly to set himself on a level with him, if not above him: We ever, says he, thought the same thoughts, and were ever of the same sentiments: which tho' it may imply that they were of equal wisdom; yet there is room left for it to signify, that *Ulysses* always assented to the wisdom of *Nestor*. *East.*

v. 157. *The Council or the Assembly.*] There is a remarkable difference between *βουλή* and *ἀγορά*. The former denotes a select number of men assembled in council; the latter a public assembly where all the people were present. *East.*

v. 165. *Sent by Pallas*—] *Nestor* in modesty conceals the reason of the anger of the Goddess; out of respect to *Ajax* the *Locrian*

The Brother-Kings inspir'd with fell debate;
 Who call'd to council all th' *Achaian* state,
 But call'd untimely (not the sacred rite
 170 Observ'd, nor heedful of the setting light,
 Nor herald sworn, the session to proclaim)
 Sour with debauch, a reeling tribe they came.
 To these the cause of meeting they explain,
 And *Menelaus* moves to cross the main;

Locrian who was then dead: The crime of *Ajax* was the violation of *Cassandra* even in the temple of *Minerva* before her image. But why should the Goddess be angry at others for the crime of *Ajax*? this is because they omitted to punish the offenders. If *Ajax* was criminal in offending, others are criminal for not punishing the offence. *Enstathius*.

The crime of *Ajax* is mention'd in *Virgil*. *Æn.* i.

————— *Pallas hæc exurere classem
 Argivam, atque ipsas potius submergere ponto,
 Unius ob noxam, & furtas Ajacis Oilei? &c.*
 Could angry *Pallas* with revengeful spleen
 The *Grecian* navy burn, and drown the men?
 She for the fault of one offending foe,
 The bolts of Jove himself presum'd to throw. *Dryd.*

Virgil borrow'd the description of the punishment of *Ajax* from the fourth of the *Odyssey*.

v. 168, &c. Who call'd to council ———

But call'd untimely, &c.]

It may seem at first view, that the Poet affirms the night to be an improper season to convene a Council. This is not his meaning; In the *Iliad*, there are several councils by night; nay, *ἐν νυκτὶ βουλή* is used proverbially to express the best-concerted councils. What therefore *Nestor* here condemns is the calling not a select, but public assembly of the soldiers in the night, when they are in no danger of an enemy, and when they are apt to fly into insolence thro' wine, and the joy of victory. The night is then undoubtedly an ill chosen season: because the licence of the soldier cannot be so well restrain'd by night as by day. *Enstathius*.

104 *HOMER'S ODYSSEY*. Book III.

- 175 Not so the King of Men: he will'd to stay;
 The sacred rites and hecatombs to pay,
 And calm *Minerva's* wrath. Oh blind to fate!
 The Gods not lightly change their love, or hate.
 With ire-full taunts each other they oppose,
 180 'Till in loud tumult all the *Greeks* arose.
 Now different counsels ev'ry breast divide,
 Each burns with rancour to the adverse side;
 Th' unquiet night strange projects entertain'd;
 (So *Jove*, that urg'd us to our fate, ordain'd.)
 185 We, with the rising morn our ships unmoor'd,
 And brought our captives and our stores aboard;
 But half the people with respect obey'd
 The King of Men, and at his bidding stay'd.
 Now on the wings of winds our course we keep;
 190 (For God had smooth'd the waters of the deep)
 For *Tenedos* we spread our eager oars,
 There land, and pay due victims to the pow'rs:
 To bless our safe return we join in pray'r,
 But angry *Jove* dispers'd our vows in air,

v. 177. *Oh blind to fate!*] It may be ask'd why *Nestor* condemns so solemnly this Heroe, calling him *Nirrios*, when he describes him in so pious an action? this is not because the Gods are implacable, for as *Homer* himself writes, *Ἐργαστοὶ δὲ καὶ θεοὶ αἰσχροί*; but because he vainly imagin'd that they would so soon be appeas'd, without any justice done upon the offender: *Ὀὐκ ἴσθ' ἵνα* are the words of *Enthetias*.

And

- 195 And rais'd new discord. Then (so Heav'n decreed)
Ulysses first and *Nestor* disagreed:
 Wise as he was, by various Counsels sway'd,
 He there, tho' late, to please the Monarch, stay'd.
 But I, determin'd, stem the foamy floods,
 200 Warn'd of the coming fury of the Gods.
 With us *Tydidēs* fear'd, and urg'd his haste:
 And *Menelaus* came, but came the last.
 He join'd our vessels in the *Lesbian* bay,
 While yet we doubted of our watry way;
 205 If to the right to urge the pilot's toil,
 (The safer road) beside the *Psyrian* isle;
 Or the strait course to rocky *Chios* plow,
 And anchor under *Mimas'* shaggy brow?

v. 197. *Wise as he was, by various counsels sway'd,*
He there, tho' late, to please the Monarch, stay'd.

It is with great address that *Nestor* relates the return of *Ulysses* to *Agamemnon*; he ascribes it not directly to *Ulysses*, but to his associates in the voyage; he mollifies it, in complaisance to *Telemachus*. But *Nestor*, according to *Dacier*, conceals the true reason of his return; it was not to please *Agamemnon*, but out of fear of the Goddess *Minerva*, whose statue he had taken by force from *Troy*: to appease that Goddess, he returns to join in sacrifice with *Agamemnon*. *Enstathius*.

v. 200. *Warn'd of the coming fury of the Gods.* It may be ask'd how *Nestor* attain'd this knowledge of the evils which the Gods were preparing? *Enstathius* ascribes it to his great Wisdom, which gave him an insight into futurity. *Dacier* with more reason tells us, that *Nestor* knew that *Minerva* had been offended, and might consequently apprehend a punishment was to be inflicted for the offence.

- We fought direction of the pow'r divine:
 210 The God propitious gave the guiding sign;
 Thro' the mid seas he bids our navy steer,
 And in *Eubœa* shun the woes we fear.
 The whistling winds already wak'd the sky;
 Before the whistling winds the vessels fly,
 215 With rapid swiftness cut the liquid way,
 And reach *Gereſtus* at the point of day.
 There hecatombs of bulls to *Neptune* slain
 High-flaming please the monarch of the main.
 The fourth day shone, when all their labours o'er
 220 *Tydidæ's* vessels touch'd the wish'd-for shore:
 But I to *Pylos* scud before the gales,
 The God still breathing on my swelling sails;
 Sep'rate from all, I safely landed here;
 Their fates or fortunes never reach'd my ear.
 225 Yet what I learn'd, attend, as here I sat,
 And ask'd each voyager each Heroe's fate;
 Curious to know, and willing to relate.

v. 221. *But I to Pylos, &c.*] *Eustathius* observes from the Antients, that the Poet with great judgment suspends, and breaks off this relation of *Nestor*; by this method he has an opportunity to carry *Telemachus* to other countries, and insert into his Poem the story of *Mentelao* and *Helen*: This method likewise gives an air of probability to what he writes; the Poet seems afraid to deceive, and when he sends *Telemachus* to other parts for better intelligence, he seems to consult truth and exactness.

- Safe reach'd the *Myrmidons* their native land,
 Beneath *Achilles'* warlike son's command.
 230 Those, whom the heir of great *Apollo's* art
 Brave *Philoctetes* taught to wing the dart;
 And those whom *Idomeneus* from *Ilium's* plain
 Had led, securely cross'd the dreadful main.
 How *Agamemnon* touch'd his *Argive* coast,
 235 And how his life by fraud and force he lost,
 And how the Murd'rer pay'd his forfeit breath;
 What lands so distant from that scene of death
 But trembling heard the Fame? and heard, admire
 How well the son appear'd his slaughter'd fire!
 240 Ev'n to th' unhappy, that unjustly bleed,
 Heav'n gives Posterity t' avenge the deed.

v. 229. *Achilles' warlike son.*] The son of *Achilles* was nam'd *Neoptolemus*, by others *Pyrrhus*; his story is this: When he had reach'd *Theffaly* with the *Myrmidons* of *Achilles*, by the advice of *Thetis* he set fire to his vessels; and being warn'd by *Heleneus*, from the oracles, to fix his habitation where he found a house whose foundations were iron, whose walls were wood, and whose roof was wool; he took his journey on foot, and coming to a certain lake of *Epirus*, he found some persons fixing their spears with the points downwards into the earth, and covering the tops of them with their cloaks, and after this manner making their tents: he look'd upon the Oracle as fulfill'd, and dwelt there. Afterwards having a son by *Andromache* the wife of *Hector*, he nam'd him *Molossus*, from whom the region took the name of *Molossia*. From this country are the *Molossi canes*, mention'd by *Virgil*. *Enstathius*.

So fell *Ægythius*; and may'st thou, my friend,
 (On whom the virtues of thy fire descend)
 Make future times thy equal act adore,

245 And be, what brave *Orestes* was before!

The prudent youth reply'd. Oh thou the grace
 And lasting glory of the *Grecian* race!
 Just was the vengeance, and to latest days
 Shall long posterity resound the praise.

250 Some God this arm with equal prowess blest!

And the proud Suitors shall its force confess:
 Injurious men! who while my soul is sore
 Of fresh Affronts, are meditating more.
 But heav'n denies this honour to my hand,

255 Nor shall my father repossess the land:

The father's fortune never to return,
 And the sad son's to suffer and to mourn!

Thus he, and *Nestor* took the word: My son,
 Is it then true, as distant rumours run,

v. 242. *So fell Ægythius; and may'st thou, my friend, &c.*] *Nestor* introduces the mention of *Ægythius* very artfully; it is to raise an emulation in *Telemachus* to revenge *Ulysses*, as *Orestes* had *Agamemnon*; it has the intended effect, and we find that *Telemachus* dwells upon his story with a virtuous envy; yet at the same time with great modesty: *Enstathius* gives a different reading in

————— *ισσομένης αὐθιότητος*, or,
 ————— *ισσομένης αὐθιότητος*.

both the expressions are used in *Homer*, the preference is therefore submitted to the Reader.

That

- 260 That crowds of rivals for thy mother's charms
 Thy Palace fill with insults and alarms?
 Say, is the fault, thro' tame submission, thine?
 Or leagu'd against thee, do thy people join,
 Mov'd by some Oracle, or voice divine?
 265 And yet who knows, but ripening lies in fate
 An hour of vengeance for th' afflicted state;
 When great *Ulysses* shall suppress these harms,
Ulysses singly, or all Greece in arms.

But

v. 264. *Mov'd by some Oracle, or voice divine.*] The words in the original are, following the voice of some God, that is, some Oracle: *Homer* does not confine the expression either to a good or bad sense, but the context plainly shews, that they must be understood in a bad sense; namely to imply, that the people had recourse to pretended Oracles to justify their rebellion. This is evident from what follows, where *Nestor* encourages *Telemachus* to expect that *Ulysses* may punish them for their crimes, *ἀπορίας ἔσθαι*— if there had been no crime, there ought to be no punishment.

v. 268. *Ulysses singly, or all Greece in arms.*] The Poet shews his great judgment in preparing the Reader for the destruction of the Suitors: that great Catastrophe is manag'd by few hands, and it might seem incredible that so few could destroy so many: the Poet therefore, to give an air of truth to his action, frequently inculcates the assistance of *Pallas*, which must at least shew, that such a great exploit is not impossible to be executed by stratagems and valour: It is by art, not strength, that *Ulysses* conquers.

All Greece in arms.

This is spoken in a general sense, and comprehends not only the subjects of *Ulysses*, or even the *Pylans* and *Spartans*, but implies that all the *Greeks* would rise in the cause of *Ulysses*. What the Suitors had spoken scoffingly in the preceding book, viz. that *Telemachus* was failing to *Pyle* or *Sparta* for supplies, appears in this not to be impracticable; so that it was choice and not necessity that determin'd the Poet to make use of no such easy expedients for the destruction of the Suitors. *Enstathius*.

It

110 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book III.

But if *Athena*, War's triumphant maid,
 270 The happy son, will, as the father, aid,
 (Whose fame and safety was her constant care
 In ev'ry danger and in ev'ry war:
 Never on man did heav'nly favour shine
 With rays so strong, distinguish'd and divine,
 275 As those with which *Minerva* mark'd thy fire)
 So might she love thee, so thy soul inspire!
 Soon shou'd their hopes in humble dust be laid,
 And long oblivion of the bridal bed.
 Ah! no such hope (the Prince with sighs replies)
 280 Can touch my breast; that blessing heav'n denies.

It may be added, that the very nature of Epic Poetry, and of the *Odyssey* in particular, requires such a conduct: In the *Iliad* *Achilles* is the chief agent, and performs almost all the great actions; *Aeneas* is painted after the same manner by *Virgil*; the one kills *Hector*, the other *Turnus*, both which are the decisive actions: It was equally necessary to exalt the character of *Ulysses*, by bringing him into difficulties from which he is personally to extricate himself: This the Poet sufficiently brings about by refusing all the easy methods for his re-establishment, because the more difficult ways are most conducive to the honour of his Heroe: Thus as *Achilles* and *Aeneas* kill *Hector* and *Turnus* with their own hands, so the Sutors fall chiefly by the hand of *Ulysses*. It is necessary for the Heroe of the Poem to execute the decisive action, for by this method the Poet compleats his character, his own greatness firmounts all difficulties, and he goes off the stage with the utmost advantage, by leaving a noble character upon the mind of the spectators.

Ev'n

Book III. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 111

Ev'n by celestial favour were it giv'n,
Fortune or fate wou'd cross the will of heav'n.

What words are these, and what imprudence thine?

(Thus interpos'd the Martial maid divine)

285 Forgetful youth! but know, the Pow'r above
With ease can save each object of his love;
Wide as his will, extends his boundless grace;
Nor lost in time, nor circumscrib'd by place.
Happier his lot, who, many sorrows past,
290 Long-lab'ring gains his natal shore at last;

Than

v. 282. *Fortune or Fate wou'd cross the will of Heav'n.*] It may be ask'd how an expression so near blasphemy, as *Eusebius* observes, could escape a person of such piety as *Telemachus*? 'Tis true, the Poet makes *Minerva* herself correct it; but yet the objection remains, viz. how could *Telemachus* speak it? I think since the Poet himself condemns it, we may give it up as an indecency in *Telemachus*; it is natural for men in despair (and that was the condition of *Telemachus*) to use a vehemence of expression, and this might transport *Telemachus* beyond the bounds of prudence. The only possible way that occurs to me to take off the impiety, is to have recourse to *Destiny*: It was the opinion of the Ancients, that the Gods could not alter *Destiny*: and then *Telemachus* may mean no more, than that it was decreed by the *Destinies* that *Ulysses* shall return no more, so the Gods themselves could not restore him.

Thus in the 15th of the *Metamorphosis*, *Venus* in vain applies to the Gods to preserve *Julius Caesar*.

— Superosque movet, qui rumpere quanquam
Ferreæ non possunt veterum decreta sororum, &c.

And a little lower *Jupiter* says to *Venus*,

— Sola insuperabile fatum,
Nata, movere paras?

v. 289. *Happier his lot, who, &c.*] Nothing can be better imagin'd to encourage *Telemachus*, than what the Poet here delivers:

112 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book III.

Than who too speedy, hastes to end his life

By some stern ruffian, or adult'rous wife.

Death only is the lot which none can miss,

And all is possible to heav'n, but this.

295 The best, the dearest fav'rite of the sky

Must taste that cup, for man is born to die.

Thus check'd, reply'd *Ulysses'* prudent heir:

Mentor, no more—the mournful thought forbear;

For he no more must draw his country's breath,

300 Already snatch'd by Fate, and the black doom of death !

vers: She sets *Agamemnon* in opposition to *Ulysses*: *Agamemnon* made a speedy voyage to his country, and there fell by treachery; *Ulysses* has long been absent, but yet is happier than *Agamemnon*: the Gods perhaps reserve him for better fortunes, at least nothing can be concluded from his long absence, and this is sufficient to teach *Telemachus* not to despair. *Enstathius*.

v. 294. And all is possible to heav'n, but this.] What *Minerva* here says justifies the remark I made, that what *Telemachus* seem'd to have spoken rashly, may be soften'd, if not vindicated,* by having recourse to Destiny: It is evident from this passage, that *Destiny* was superior to the power of the Gods; otherwise *Minerva* speaks as blasphemously as *Telemachus*: For what difference is there between saying, that the Gods cannot preserve even these they love from death, and saying that the Gods could not save *Ulysses*? Why therefore may not the words of *Telemachus* be thought to have a respect to Destiny?

I am of opinion, that the Poet had something further in view by putting these words into the mouth of *Minerva*: The words of *Telemachus*, if taken grossly, might appear shocking to so pious a person as *Nestor*, and make an ill impression upon him to the disadvantage of *Telemachus*; *Minerva* therefore artfully explains it, and softens the horror of it by reconciling it to the Theology of those ages.

Pass we to other subjects; and engage

On themes remote the venerable Sage:

(Who thrice has seen the perishable kind..

Of men decay, and thro' three ages shin'd,

305 Like Gods majestic, and like Gods in mind.)

For much he knows, and just conclusions draws

From various precedents, and various laws.

O son of *Neleus*! awful *Nestor*, tell

How he, the mighty, *Agamemnon* fell?

By

v. 301. *Pass we to other subjects.*—————] *Telemachus* here puts several questions, as it were in a breath, to *Nestor*: and *Plutarch* observes upon this passage, that he who enquires any thing of an old man, tho' the old man himself has no concern in the story, wins his heart at once; and incites a person, who is upon all occasions very willing to discourse. He introduces this as an instance of the art *Telemachus* uses, in adapting himself by his questions to the temper of the person with whom he converses: He puts together, continues he, several questions upon several subjects, which is more judicious than to confine his answer to a single interrogatory, and by that method deprive *Nestor* of one of the most pleasant enjoyments of old age, I mean the pleasure of talking. *Plutarch. Symposiac.*

v. 303. *Who thrice has seen the perishable kind*
Of men decay—————]

The Poet here tells us that *Nestor* was now in his fourth generation: *Ovid* took the word *γίνα* to signify an hundred years; but then *Nestor* must have been above three hundred years old. Others with more probability understand it to signify a generation, or such a portion of time in which any race of men flourish together, which is computed to be about thirty years. I refer the Reader to the Note upon the 33^d verse in the first book of the *Iliad*, for the particular age of *Nestor*. According to that computation, he must now be about ninety five years of age.

v. 309. *How he, the mighty, Agamemnon fell?*] *Telemachus* does not ask this question out of curiosity, but with great judgment; he knows there were designs against his life, as well as there

- 310 By what strange fraud *Ægythius* wrought, relate,
 (By force he could not) such a Heroe's fate?
 Līv'd *Menelaus* not in *Greece*? or where
 Was then the martial brother's pious care?
 Condemn'd perhaps some foreign shore to tread;
 315 Or sure *Ægythius* had not dar'd the deed.
 To whom the Full of Days. Illustrious youth,
 Attend (tho' partly thou hast guest) the truth.
 For had the martial *Menelaus* found
 The ruffian breathing yet on *Argive* ground;
 320 Nor earth had hid his carcase from the skies,
 Nor *Grecian* virgins shriek'd his obsequies,
 But fowls obscene dismember'd his remains,
 And dogs had torn him on the naked plains.
 While us the works of bloody *Mars* employ'd,
 325 The wanton youth inglorious peace enjoy'd;
 He, stretch'd at ease in *Argos*' calm recess,
 (Whose stately steeds luxuriant pastures bless)
 With flattery's insinuating art
 Sooth'd the frail Queen, and poyson'd all her heart.
 330 At first with worthy shame and decent pride,
 The royal dame his lawless suit deny'd.

there had been against *Agamemnon*; he therefore asks it, that he may learn how to defeat them; chiefly to instruct himself how best to assist his father upon his return, by aiding him in escaping the snarcs of the Suitors. *Dacier.*

For

Book III. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 115

For Virtue's image yet possess her mind,
Taught by a Master of the tuneful kind:

Atrides, parting for the Trojan war,

335 Consign'd the youthful consort to his care;

True to his charge, the Bard preserv'd her long

In honour's limits (such the pow'r of Song)

But when the Gods these objects of their hate

Dragg'd to destruction, by the links of fate;

340 The bard they banish'd from his native soil,

And left all helpless in a desert isle:

v. 334. *Taught by a master of the tuneful kind.*] *Homer* thro' the whole *Odyssey* speaks much in honour of the Art which he himself loved, and in which he so eminently excell'd: From these and other passages we may learn the state of Poetry in those ages: "Poets (says *Enslathins*) were rank'd in the class of Philosophers; and the Ancients made use of them as Præceptors "in Music and Morality." *Strabo* quotes this very passage as an instance of the excellence of Poetry in forming the soul to worthy actions: *Aegyptus* could not debauch *Clytemnestra*, 'till he banish'd the Poet, who was her guide and instructor.

Various are the conjectures of the Ancients about the name of the Bard here celebrated: Some, says *Enslathins*, tell us, it was *Chariades*, some *Demodocus*, some *Glaucus*, &c. but I pass them over, because they are conjectures.

There were many degrees of these *aoidoi*; some were *aoidoi Spion*, others *aoidoi an' raius*: But such Bards as are here mention'd were of an higher station, and retain'd as instructors by Kings and Princes.

I cannot omit one remark of *Enslathins*: he tells us, that some persons write that these *aoidoi* had their names from hence, *aoidoi* *μη ἰχθυες*; exactly resembling the modern *Italian* fingers: *Madam Dacier* is not to be forgiven for passing over a remark of such importance; If this be true, it makes a great difference between the ancient and modern Poets, and is the only advantage I know we have over them.

There

There he, the sweetest of the sacred train,
 Sung dying to the rocks, but sung in vain.
 Then Virtue was no more (her guard away)

345 She fell, to lust a voluntary prey.

Ev'n to the temple stalk'd th'adult'rous spouse,
 With impious thanks, and mockery of vows,
 With images, with garments, and with gold,
 And od'rous fumes from loaded altars roll'd.

350 Mean time from flaming Troy we cut the way,
 With *Menelaus*, thro' the curling sea.

But when to *Sanium's* sacred point we came,
 Crown'd with the temple of th' *Athenian* dame;

v. 344. *Then Virtue was no more (her guard away)*
She fell, ——— &c.]

There is a fine moral couch'd in the story of the Bard and *Clytemnestra*; it admirably paints the advantage we draw from wise companions for the improvement of our Virtues: *Clytemnestra* was chaste because her instructor was wise: His wisdom was an insuperable guard to her modesty. It was long before she yielded; virtue and honour had a long contest: but she no sooner yielded to adultery, but she assisted in the murder of her husband; from whence we may draw another moral, that one vice betrays us into another; and when once the fences of honour are thrown down, we become a prey to every passion. *Dacier.*

v. 346. *Ev'n to the temple stalk'd th' adult'rous spouse.]* Here is a surprizing mixture of religion and impiety: *Ægyfthos*, upon the accomplishment of so great a crime as adultery, returns thanks to the Gods by oblations, as if they had assisted him in the execution of it. *Nestor* dwells upon it at large, to shew that *Ægyfthos* greatly aggravated his guilt by such a piece of impious devotion. *Dacier.*

Atrides'

Book III. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 117

Atrides' pilot, *Phrontes*, there expir'd;
 355 (*Phrontes*, of all the sons of men admir'd
 To steer the bounding bark with steady toil,
 When the storm thickens, and the billows boil)
 While yet he exercis'd the steersman's art,
Apollo touch'd him with his gentle dart;
 360 Ev'n with the rudder in his hand, he fell.
 To pay whose honours to the Shades of hell,
 We check'd our haste, by pious office bound,
 And laid our old companion in the ground.
 And now, the rites discharg'd, our course we keep
 365 Far on the gloomy bosom of the deep:
 Soon as *Malan's* misty tops arise,
 Sudden the Thund'r'er blackens all the skies,

v. 359. *Apollo touch'd him with his gentle dart.*] *Homer* calls the darts of *Apollo* ἀγὰς, or gentle; to signify that those who dye thus suddenly, die without pain: *Eusebius*.

Dacier complains that some Critics think *Homer* worthy of blame for enlarging upon so mean a person as a pilot. It is a sufficient answer to observe, that arts were in high esteem in those times, and men that were eminent in them were in great honour. Neither were arts then confin'd as in these ages to mean personages: no less a person than *Ulysses* builds a vessel in the sequel of the *Odyssey*; so that this is a false piece of delicacy. If *Homer* be culpable, so is *Virgil*; he gives the genealogy of *Palinurus*, as well as *Homer* of *Phrontes*. *Virgil's* description is censur'd as too long, *Homer* concludes his in seven lines; and lastly, *Virgil's* Episode has been judg'd by the Critics to be an unnecessary ornament, and to contribute nothing to the Poem: *Homer* relates the death of *Phrontis*, to introduce the dispersion of the fleet of *Menelaus*; the fleet might well be scatter'd, when it wanted so excellent a pilot.

And

118 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book III.

And the winds whistle, and the surges roll
Mountains on mountains, and obscure the pole.

370 The tempest scatters, and divides our fleet;
Part, the storm urges on the coast of *Crete*,
Where winding round the rich *Cydonian* plain,
The streams of *Jardan* issue to the main.
There stands a rock, high eminent and steep,

375 Whose shaggy brow o'erhangs the shady deep,
And views *Gortyna* on the western side;
On this rough *Auster* drove th' impetuous tide:
With broken force the billows row'd away,
And heav'd the fleet into the neighb'ring bay.

380 Thus sav'd from death they gain'd the *Phæstian* shores,
With shatter'd vessels, and disabled oars:
But five tall barks the winds and waters tost
Far from their fellows, on th' *Ægyptian* coast.

There

v. 371. *Part, the storm urges on the coast of Crete.*] *Homer* does not amuse us by relating what became of these companions of *Menelaus*; he omits this judiciously, and follows the thread of his story: *Menelaus* is the person whom the Poet has in view; he therefore passes over the story of his companions, to carry on the fable of the Poem by leading us directly to *Menelaus*.

v. 383. ———— *On th' Ægyptian coast.*] In the original it is, *The wind and water carry'd them to Ægyptus*. *Homer* by *Ægyptus* means the river *Nile*, and then it is always used in the masculine gender; the region about it took its name from the river *Ægyptus*, this is always used in the feminine gender; but the country had not receiv'd that name in the days of *Homer*. *Eastathius*.

What

Book III. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 119

There wander'd *Menelaus* thro' foreign shores,
 385 Amassing gold, and gath'ring naval stores;
 While curst *Egyptus* the detested deed
 By fraud fulfill'd, and his great brother bled.
 Sev'n years, the traitor rich *Mycena* sway'd,
 And his stern rule the groaning land obey'd;
 390 The eighth, from *Athens* to his realm restor'd,
Orestes brandish'd the revenging sword,
 Slew the dire pair, and gave to fun'ral flame
 The vile assassin, and adult'rous dame.
 That day, ere yet the bloody triumphs cease,
 395 Return'd *Atrides* to the coast of *Greece*,
 And safe to *Argus* port his navy brought,
 With gifts of price and pond'rous treasure fraught.

What *Dacier* adds to this observation, may assist in determining the dispute concerning the priority of *Homer* and *Hesiod*: *Hesiod* makes mention of the river *Nilus*; if therefore it be true that *Egyptus* had not been called by the name of *Nilus* in the times of *Homer*, it is a demonstration that *Hesiod* was posterior to *Homer*; otherwise he could not have been acquainted with any other name but that of *Egyptus*.

v. 390. From *Athens* to his realm —————.] There is a different reading in this place: instead of *ἀπὸ Ἀθηνῶν*, some write *ἀπὸ Φωκίας*; for *Orestes* was educated by *Strophius* King of *Phocis*, and father of *Pylades*: The Ancients reconcile the difference, by saying that *Orestes* might be sent from *Phocis* to *Athens* for his education, and returning thence to his own country, might revenge the death of his father *Agamemnon*; so that although he was first bred up in *Phocis*, he was afterwards a sojourner in *Athens*. *Estiathius*.

Hence

120 *HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book III.*

Hence warn'd, my son beware! nor idly stand
Too long a stranger to thy native land;

400 Left heedless absence wear thy wealth away,
While lawless feasters in thy palace sway;
Perhaps may seize thy realm, and share the spoil;
And thou return, with disappointed toil,
From thy vain journey, to a rifled Isle.

405 Howe'er, my friend, indulge one labour more,
And seek *Atrides* on the *Spartan* shore.
He, wand'ring long, a wider circle made,
And many-languag'd nations has survey'd;
And measur'd tracts unknown to other ships,

410 Amid the monstrous wonders of the deeps;
(A length of Ocean and unbounded sky,
Which scarce the Sea-fowl in a year o'erfly)

Go

v. 411. *A length of Ocean and unbounded sky,
Which scarce the sea-fowl in a year o'erfly.*]

It must be confess'd, that *Nestor* greatly exaggerates this description: *Homer* himself tells us, that a ship may sail in five days from *Crete* to *Egypt*; wherefore then this Hyperbole of *Nestor*? It might perhaps be to deter *Telemachus* from a design of sailing to *Crete*, and he through his inexperience might believe the description. It may be added, that what *Nestor* speaks concerning the flight of birds, may be only said to shew the great distance of that sea: Nay, by a favourable interpretation it may be reconcil'd to truth; the meaning then must be this: Should a person observe that sea a whole year, he would not see one bird flying over it; both because of the vastness and dreadfulnefs of it; and perhaps the whole of this might arise from the observation, that this sea is not frequented by birds. This is wholly and almost literally taken from *Enstachius*;

Book III. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 121

- Go then; to *Sparta* take the wat'ry way,
 Thy ship and sailors but for orders stay;
 415 Or if by land thou chuse thy course to bend,
 My steeds, my chariots, and my sons attend:
 Thee to *Arides* they shall safe convey,
 Guides of thy road, companions of thy way.
 Urge him with truth to frame his free replies,
 420 And sure he will: For *Menelas* is wife.
 Thus while he speaks, the ruddy sun descends,
 And twilight grey her ev'ning shade extends.
 Then thus the blue-ey'd Maid: O full of days!
 Wife are thy words, and just are all thy ways.
 425 Now immolate the Tongues, and mix the wine,
 Sacred to *Neptune* and the pow'rs divine.

The

ships; and if we add to this the ignorance of the sea and sea-affairs in those ages, we shall the less wonder to hear so wise a man as *Nestor* describing it with so much terror; Navigation is now greatly improv'd, and the Moderns sail further in a month, than the Ancients could in a year; their whole art consisting chiefly in coasting along the shores, and consequently they made but little way.

V. 425. *Now immolate the tongues*—.] Various are the reasons which *Enstathius* reports concerning this oblation of the tongues at the conclusion of the sacrifice. It was to purge themselves from any evil words they might have utter'd; or because the tongue was reckon'd the best part of the sacrifice, and so reserv'd for the completion of it; or they offer'd the tongue to the Gods, as witnesses to what they had spoken. I omit the rest as superfluous. They had a custom of offering the tongues to *Mercury*, because they believed him the giver of Eloquence. *Dacier* expatiates upon this custom. The people, says she, might fear, lest thro'

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thro'

122 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book III.

The lamp of day is quench'd beneath the deep,
And soft approach the balmy hours of sleep:
Nor fits it to prolong the heav'nly feast

430 Timeless, indecent, but retire to rest.

So spake *Jove's* daughter, the celestial maid.
The sober train attended and obey'd.
The sacred heralds on their hands around
Pour'd the full urns; the youths the goblets crown'd:
435 From bowl to bowl the holy bev'rage flows;
While to the final sacrifice they rose.
The tongues they cast upon the fragrant flame,
And pour, above, the consecrated stream.

thro' wine and the joy of the festival they might have utter'd some words unbecoming the sanctity of the occasion: by this sacrifice of the tongues, they signify'd that they purged away whatever they had spoken amiss during the festival; and ask'd in particular pardon of *Mercury*, who presided over discourse, to the end they might not carry home any uncleanness which might stop the blessings expected from the sacrifice.

v. 429. *Nor fits it to prolong the heav'nly feast,
Timeless, indecent, &c.]*

Eustathius shews the difference between *iopai*, festivals, and *θυσιαί*, or sacrifices: in the former it was customary to spend the whole night in wine and rejoicing: In the latter, this was reckon'd an unlawful custom, thro' the fear of falling into any indecencies thro' wine. He likewise gives another reason of this injunction, by telling us that it was the custom to offer sacrifices to the celestial Powers in the day, and even to finish them about the setting of the sun; and that those who dealt in incantations perform'd their sacrifices to the infernal powers by night, and finish'd them before sun-rising. Either of these reasons sufficiently explains the words of the Goddess; and the former carries in it an excellent moral, that particular care should be taken in our acts of devotion, not to turn religion into impiety.

And

Book III. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 123

And now, their thirst by copious draughts allay'd,

- 440 The youthful Heroe and th' *Athenian* maid
Propose departure from the finish'd rite,
And in their hollow bark to pass the night:
But this the hospitable Sage deny'd.
Forbid it, *Jove!* and all the Gods! he cry'd,
445 Thus from my walls the much-lov'd son to send
Of such a heroe, and of such a friend!
Me, as some needy peasant, would ye leave,
Whom heav'n denies the blessing to relieve?
Me would ye leave, who boast imperial sway,
450 When beds of royal state invite your stay?

No—

v. 450. *When beds of royal state invite your stay.*] This passage gives us a full insight into the manners of these hospitable ages; they not only kept a treasury for bowls or vases of gold or silver, to give as *ceruina*, or gifts of hospitality, but also a wardrobe of various habits and rich furniture, to lodge and bestow upon strangers. *Enslathius* relates, that *Tellias* of *Agrigentum* was a person of so great hospitality, that five hundred horsemen coming to his house in the winter season, he entertain'd them, and gave every man a cloak and a tunic. This laudable custom prevailed, and still prevails, in the eastern countries: it was the practice of *Abraham* of old, and is at this day of the *Turks*, as we may learn from their *Caravansaries*, erected for the reception of travellers. And yet *Dacier* observes, that a *French Critic* has shew'd so ill a taste as to ridicule this passage. "*Telemachus* (says that Author) being enter-
tain'd by *Nestor*, intimates his intention of returning to lodge on
"ship-board with his companions: but *Nestor* detains him, by
"asking if he thought he had not quilts or coverlets to give him
"a Night's lodging; Upon this *Telemachus* goes to bed in a re-
"sounding gallery, and *Nestor* in a bed which his wife made rea-
"dy for him." The noblest things are most liable to burlesque,
"by perverting their meaning; as some pictures, by varying the
position,

No—long as life this mortal shall inspire,
 Or as my children imitate their fire,
 Here shall the wand'ring stranger find his home,
 And hospitable rites adorn the dome.

- 455 Well hast thou spoke (the blue-ey'd maid replies)
 Belov'd old man! benevolent, as wise.
 Be the kind dictates of thy heart obey'd,
 And let thy words *Telemachus* persuade:
 He to thy palace shall thy steps pursue;
 460 I to the ship, to give the orders due,
 Prescribe directions, and confirm the crew.
 For I alone sustain their naval cares,
 Who boast experience from these silver hairs;
 All youths the rest, whom to this journey move
 465 Like years, like tempers, and their Prince's love.
 There in the vessel shall I pass the night;
 And soon as morning paints the fields of light,
 I go to challenge from the *Caucons* bold,
 A debt, contracted in the days of old.

But

position, represent a man or a monster. He is very severe upon the *refounding gallery*, which in truth means no more than very lofty or elevated, and by consequence very noble and magnificent.

v. 467. *I go to challenge from the Caucons.*] The Poet makes a double use of these words of the Goddess; she gives an air of probability to her excuse, why she should not be press'd to stay; and at the same time *Homer* avoids the absurdity of introducing that Goddess at *Sparta*, *Menelaus* and *Helos* are celebrating the nuptials of their son and daughter: *Minerva* is a Virgin Deity, and consequently an enemy to all nuptial ceremonies. *Engelstins.*

But

Book III. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 125

470 But this thy guest, receiv'd with friendly care,
 Let thy strong coursers swift to *Sparta* bear;
 Prepare thy chariot at the dawn of day,
 And be thy son companion of his way.

Then turning with the word, *Minerva* flies,

475 And soars an Eagle thro' the liquid skies.

Vision divine! The throng'd spectators gaze

In holy wonder fixt, and still amaze.

But chief the rev'rend Sage admir'd; he took

The hand of young *Telemachus*, and spoke.

Oh

But it may be necessary to observe who these *Cancons* are: we find in the tenth book the *Cancons* mention'd as auxiliaries to *Troy*: There *Dolon* says

*The Carians, Cancons, the Pelasgian host,
 And Leleges encamp along the coast.*

Are these *Cancons* the same with those here mention'd? *Eustathius* informs us, that there was a people of *Triphyly*, between *Elis* and *Pylus*, named *Cancons*: But *Strabo* says, that the whole race is now extinct, and that these here mention'd are of *Dymea*, and take their name from the river *Cancon*: whereas those in the *Iliad* are *Paphlagonians*: they were a wandering nation, and consequently might be the same people originally, and retain the same name in different countries.

v. 478. But chief the rev'rend Sage admir'd——] It may be ask'd why *Nestor* is in such a surprize at the discovery of the Goddess: It is evident from the *Iliad*, that he had been no stranger to such intercourses of the Deities; nay, in this very book *Nestor* tells us, that *Ulysses* enjoy'd almost the constant presence of *Minerva*; inasmuch that *Sophocles*, the great imitator of *Homer*, relates, that he knew the Goddess by her voice, without seeing her. *Eustathius* answers, that the wonder of *Nestor* arose not from the discovery of that Deity, but that she should accompany so young a person as *Telemachus*: After her departure, the old man stood

G. 3.

amaz'd,

480 Oh happy Youth! and favour'd of the skies,
Distinguish'd care of guardian deities!

Whose

amaz'd, and look'd upon that Heroe as some very extraordinary person, whom in such early years the Goddesses of War and Wisdom had vouchsafed to attend. This interpretation agrees perfectly with what *Nestor* speaks to *Telemachus*.

v. 481. *Distinguish'd care of guardian deities.*] I will take this opportunity to obviate an objection that may be made against all interposition of the Gods in assisting the Heroes of the *Odyssey*: It has been thought by some Critics a disparagement to them to stand in continual need of such supernatural succour; If two persons were engaged in combat, and a third person should immediately step in to the assistance of one of the parties, and kill the adversary, would it not reflect upon the valour of his friend who was so weak as to want such assistance? Why, for instance, should *Jupiter* help *Aeneas* to kill *Turnus*? Was not he brave enough to fight, and strong enough to conquer his enemy by his own prowess? and would not *Turnus* have kill'd *Aeneas* with the same assistance? It is therefore a disparagement to the actors, thus continually to supply the defects of a Heroe, by the power of a Deity.

But this is a false way of arguing, and from hence it might be inferr'd, that the love and favour of a Deity serves only to make those whom he assists, and those who depend upon such assistance, appear weak, impotent, cowardly, and unworthy to be conquerors. Can any doubt arise whether the love and favour of a God be a disparagement or honour to those whom he favours? According to these Critics, we should find the character of a perfect Heroe in an impious *Mexentius*, who acknowledges no God but his own arm and his own sword: 'Tis true, the objection would be just, if the Heroe himself perform'd nothing of the action; or if when he were almost conquer'd by the superior valour of his enemy, he ow'd his life and victory to Gods and Miracles: But the Heroe always behaves himself in all his actions, as if he were to gain success without the assistance of the Deity; and the presence of the Gods is so order'd, that we may retrench every thing that is miraculous, without making any alteration in the action or character of the human personages. Thus in the instance of *Aeneas* and *Turnus*, tho' *Jupiter* favours *Aeneas*, yet *Aeneas* is painted in stronger colours of fortitude, he appears superior, as a man unassisted, and able to conquer *Turnus*; and consequently the favour of *Jupiter* makes no alteration in the action or character of *Aeneas*.

There

Whose early years for future worth engage,

No vulgar manhood, no ignoble age.

For lo! none other of the court above

- 15 Than she, the daughter of almighty *Jove*,

Pallas her self, the War-triumphant Maid,

Consest is thine, as once thy father's aid.

So guide me, Goddess! so propitious shine

On me, my consort, and my royal line!

10 A yearling bullock to thy name shall smoke,

Untam'd, unconscious of the galling yoke,

With ample forehead, and yet tender horns

Whose budding honours ductile gold adorns.

Submissive thus the hoary Sire preferr'd

15 His holy vow: the fav'ring Goddess heard.

Then slowly rising, o'er the sandy space

Precedes the father, follow'd by his race,

There is likewise a wide difference between the assistance of a Man, and of a God: The actions of men belong only to the performers of those actions; but when a Deity assists us by inspiring us with strength and courage, the actions we perform are really our own, and the more he favours us, the more glory he gives us: so that the assistance of man eclipses, but the assistance of a God exalts, our glory. Thus, for instance, when *Achilles* is pursuing *Hector*, he charges the *Greeks* to keep off from *Hector*; their assistance might lessen his glory: but when *Pallas* offers her assistance, he immediately embraces it as an Honour, and boasts of it as such to *Hector*. I have been large upon this objection, because the Reader ought to carry it in his memory thro' the whole Poem, and apply it to every action, in which any share is ascribed to any Deity. See *Bossu* more at large concerning this objection.

G 4

(A long

128 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book III.

(A long procession) timely marching home
In comely order to the regal dome.

505 There when arriv'd, on thrones around him plac'd,
His sons and grand-sons the wide circle grac'd.

To these the hospitable Sage, in sign
Of social welcome, mix'd the racy wine,
(Late from the mellowing cask restor'd to light,

510 By ten long years refin'd, and rosy-bright.)
To *Pallas* high the foaming bowl he crown'd,
And sprinkled large Libation on the ground.
Each drinks a full oblivion of his cares,
And to the gifts of balmy sleep repairs.

515 Deep in a rich Alcove the Prince was laid,
And slept beneath the pompous Colonnade;
Fast by his side *Pisistratus* lay spread,
(In age his equal) on a splendid bed:
But in an inner court, securely clos'd,

520 The rev'rend *Nestor* with his Queen repos'd.

When now *Aurora*, daughter of the dawn,
With rosie lustre purpled o'er the lawn;
The old man early rose, walk'd forth, and sat
On polish'd stone before his Palace gate:

With

v. 519. *And sat On polish'd stone before his Palace gate.* We have here an ancient custom recorded by the Poet; a King places himself before the gate of his Palace upon a seat of marble, worn smooth

§20 With unguents smooth the lucid marble throne,

Where ancient *Neleus* sat, a rustic throne;

But he descending to th' infernal shade,

Sage *Nestor* fill'd it, and the sceptre sway'd.

His sons around him mild obeysance pay,

§25 And duteous take the orders of the day.

First *Echephoron* and *Stratius* quit their bed;

Then *Perseus*, *Aretus*, and *Thrasymed*;

The last *Pisistratus* arose from rest :

They came, and near him plac'd the stranger-guest.

§30 To these the Senior thus declar'd his will:

My sons! the dictates of your fire fulfil.

smooth by long use, says *Enstathius*, or perhaps smooth'd exquisitely by the hand of the workman. What I would chiefly observe is, that they placed themselves thus in public for the dispatch of justice: We read in the scripture of *Judges sitting in the gate*; and that this procedure of *Nestor* was for that purpose is probable from the expression, *He sat in the seat where Neleus [μυσσας, or Consiliarius,] used to sit*, (which seems to express his wisdom in the discharge of justice.) *Nestor* is also describ'd as bearing his sceptre in his hand, which was never used but upon some act of regality, in the dispatch of justice, or other solemn occasions. Perhaps, says *Dauver*, these seats or thrones might be consecrated with oil, to draw a reverence to the seats of Justice as by an act of religion; but I rather judge (adds she) that no more is meant than to express the shining of these thrones, they being undoubtedly made of marble.

v. 528. *Pisistratus*.] Would I indulge my fancy in a conjecture; I might suppose that the famous tyrant *Pisistratus* was descended, or borrow'd his name from this son of *Nestor*. *Herodotus* informs us, as *Enstathius* observes, that all the *Pisistrati* were originally *Pylians*. If this be true, we have a very strong evidence that *Homer* is not all fiction, but that he celebrates the great men of those ages with reality, and only embellishes the true story with the ornaments of Poetry.

To *Pallas* first of Gods, prepare the feast,
 Who grac'd our rites, a more than mortal guest.
 Let one, dispatchful, bid some swain to lead

535 A well-fed bullock from the grassy mead;
 One seek the harbour where the vessels moor,
 And bring thy friends, *Telemachus*! ashore,
 (Leave only two the gally to attend)
 Another to *Laercus* must we send,

540 Artift divine, whose skillful hands infold
 The victim's horn with circumfufile gold.
 The rest may here the pious duty share,
 And bid the handmaids for the feast prepare,
 The seats to range, the fragrant wood to bring.

545 And limpid waters from the living spring.

v. 540. *Laercus* ——— *Artift divine, &c.*] The Author of the *Parallel* quotes this passage to prove that *Homer* was ignorant of the Mechanic arts: We have here, says he, a Gilder with his anvil and hammer; but what occasion has he for an anvil and hammer in the art of a Gilder? *Boileau* has excellently vindicated *Homer* from this objection, in his reflections upon *Longinus*; This Gilder was a Gold-beater: *Nestor*, we see, furnish'd the gold, and he beat it into leaves, so that he had occasion to make use of his anvil and hammer; the anvil was portable, because the work was not laborious. Our modern travellers assure us, that it is at this day the practice in the eastern regions, as in *Persia*, &c. for the artists in metals to carry about with them the whole implements of trade, to the house of the persons where they find employment; it is therefore a full vindication of *Homer*, to observe that the gold this artist used in gilding, was nothing but gold beat into fine leaves.

(He said, and busy each his care bestow'd;
 Already at the gates the bullock low'd,
 Already came the *Ithacensian* crew,
 The dextrous smith the tools already drew:
 550 His pond'rous hammer, and his anvil found,
 And the strong tongs to turn the metal round.
 Nor was *Minerva* absent from the rite,
 She view'd her honours, and enjoy'd the sight.
 With rev'rent hand the King presents the gold,
 555 Which round th' intorted horns the gilder roll'd;
 So wrought, as *Pallas* might with pride behold.

v. 552. *Nor was Minerva absent*——] It may be ask'd in what sense *Minerva* can be said to come to the sacrifice? *Eustathius* answers, that the Ancients finding the inclinations of men to be bent incontinently upon pleasures, to oblige them to use them moderately, distinguish'd times, ordain'd sacrifices, and representing the Gods in the forms of men, brought them to use these pleasures with discretion; they taught them that the Gods came down to their libations and sacrifices, to induce them to govern their conversation with reverence and modesty: Thus *Jupiter* and the other Gods in the *Iliads*, and *Neptune* in the *Odyssey*, are said to feast with the *Ethiopians*.

If I might be pardon'd a conjecture, I would suppose, that *Minerva* may in another sense be said to come to the sacrifice; I mean by her image or statue: and what may seem to confirm this opinion, is what *Diodorus* relates in his third book concerning the above-mention'd *Ethiopians*; they carry'd about the statues of *Jupiter* and the other Gods twelve days, during which time the Gods were said to be gone to the *Ethiopians*: and if the Gods may be said to come to the *Ethiopians* by their statues; why may not the same be said of *Minerva*, from the introduction of her statue among the *Pylians*? So that the appearance of the Goddess may possibly mean the appearance of her statue.

G 6.

Young.

132 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book III.

Young *Arctus* from forth his bridal bow'r
Brought the full laver, o'er their hands to pour,
And canisters of consecrated flour.

560 *Stratius* and *Echephron* the victim led;

The axe was held by warlike *Thrasymed*,
In act to strike: Before him *Perseus* stood,
The vase extending to receive the blood.
The King himself initiates to the Pow'r;

565 Scatters with quiv'ring hand the sacred flour,
And the stream sprinkles: From the curling brows
The hair collected in the fire he throws.

Soon as due vows on ev'ry part were pay'd,
And sacred wheat upon the victim lay'd,

570 Strong *Thrasymed* discharg'd the speeding blow
Full on his neck, and cut the nerves in two.

v. 560. *Stratius and Echephron, &c.*] *Nestor* here makes use only of the ministry of his sons; the reason of it is, because it was reckon'd honourable to serve in the performance of sacrifice, this being in some sense an attending upon the Gods: or because it was the practice of those ages for great persons to do those offices with their own hands, which in the latter have been perform'd by servants.

Enstathius reports a saying of *Antigonus*, who observing his son behaving himself imperiously to his subjects, "Know'st thou not," says he, that Royalty itself is but illustrious servitude!" an intimation that he himself was but a servant of the public, and therefore should use his servants with moderation.

But the true reason of *Nestor's* assisting in the sacrifice is, because Kings anciently had the inspection of religion, and Priesthood was join'd to Royalty, according to that of *Virgil*,

Rex Animus, rex idem hominum Phœbique sacerdos.

Down

Book III. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 133

Down sunk the heavy beast: the females round
Maids, wives, and matrons, mix a shrilling sound.
Nor scorn'd the Queen the holy choir to join,

575 (The first-born she, of old *Clytemnestra*'s line;
In youth by *Nestor* lov'd, of spotless fame,
And lov'd in age, *Eurydice* her name)
From earth they rear him, struggling now with death;
And *Nestor*'s Youngest stops the vents of breath.

580 The soul for ever flies: on all sides round
Streams the black blood, and smokes upon the ground.
The beast they then divide, and dis-unite
The ribs and limbs, observant of the rite:

v. 573. *Maids, wives, and matrons mix a shrilling sound.*] I have kept the meaning of the word in the original, which signifies prayers made with loud cries, ὀλοῦσθαι. ὀλοῦσθαι, says *Hesychius*, is φωνὴ γυναικῶν ἢ παῖδων ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς ἐρχόμεναι, the voice of women, which they make at sacrifices in their prayers. But there is still something in it more to the present purpose; the Scholiast upon *Eschylus* remarks, that this word is not used properly but when apply'd to the prayers offer'd to *Minerva*; for *Minerva* is the only Goddess to whom prayers are made with loud cries, she being the Goddess of War; to other Deities they offer prayer with thanksgiving; καὶ γὰρ μόνῃ τῇ Ἀθηνᾷ δαίμονι ἔση πολεμικῇ ὀλοῦσθαι, τοῖς δ' ἄλλοις θεοῖς παίωνεσθαι.

Thus also in the sixth book of the *Iliads*, verse 301.

Αἱ δ' ὀλοῦσθ' ᾤσας Ἀθηνῆ χεῖρας ἀποχον.

They fall the dome with supplicating cries,

And in the present passage in the *Odyssey*,

— αἱ δ' ὀλοῦσαν
Θυγατέρι τι, νύ τι, &c. *Dacier.*

On

134 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book III.

- On these, in double cawls involv'd with art,
 *85 The choicest morsels lay from ev'ry part.
 The sacred Sage before his altar stands,
 Turns the burnt-off'ring with his holy hands,
 And pours the wine, and bids the flames aspire:
 The youth with instruments surround the fire.
 *90 The thighs now sacrific'd, and entrails dress'd,
 Th' assistants part, transfix, and broil the rest.
 While these officious tend the rites divine,
 The last fair branch of the Nestorean line
 Sweet Polycaste, took the pleasing toil.
 *95 To bathe the Prince, and pour the fragrant oil.

v. 594. *Sweet Polycaste took the pleasing toil,
 To bathe the Prince, &c.*

It is very necessary to say something about this practice of women bathing and anointing men; it frequently occurs thro' the whole *Odyssey*, and is so contrary to the usage of the moderns, as to give offence to modesty; neither is this done by women of inferior quality, but we have here a young Princess, bathing, anointing, and cloathing the naked *Telemachus*. *Eustathius* indeed tells us, it was undoubtedly by her father's command: but if it was, a piece of immodesty, it does not solve the objection, whoever commanded it. I confess it would be immodest in these ages of the world, and the only excuse that occurs to me is, to say that Custom establish'd it. It is in manners, in some degree, as in dress; if a fashion never so indecent prevails, yet no person is ridiculous, because it is fashionable: so in manners, if a practice prevails universally, tho' not reconcilable to real modesty, yet no person can be said to be immodest who comes into it, because it is agreeable to the custom of the times and countries.

O'er

Book III. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 135

O'er his fair limbs a flow'ry vest he threw,
And issu'd, like a God, to mortal view.
His former feat beside the King he found,
(His people's Father with his peers around)

600 All plac'd at ease the holy banquet join,
And in the dazling goblet laughs the wine.
The rage of thirst and hunger now suppress,
The Monarch turns him to his royal guest;
And for the promis'd journey bids prepare

605 The smooth-hair'd horses, and the rapid car,
Observant of his word. The word scarce spoke,
The sons obey, and join them to the yoke.
Then bread and wine a ready handmaid brings,
And presents, such as suit the state of Kings.

610 The glitt'ring seat *Telemachus* ascends;
His faithful guide *Pisistratus* attends:

With

v. 610. &c. *The conclusion of the book.*] I shall lay together what I have further to observe on the conclusion of this book: It is remarkable, that the Poet does not amuse himself in describing the present he receiv'd from *Nestor*, or the provisions for the journey, or even the journey it self at large; he dispatches the whole in a few lines very judiciously; he carries his Heroe directly to *Menelaus*, who is to furnish many incidents that contribute to the design of the Poem, and passes over other matters as unnecessary.

We have here likewise a piece of poetical Geography, and learn that it is exactly two days journey from *Pyle* to *Lacedæmon*.

This book takes up three days; the first is spent in the enquiries *Telemachus* makes of *Nestor* concerning *Ulysses*; the two last in the morning sacrifice at *Pylus*, and in the journey of *Telemachus*

to

With hasty hand the ruling reins he drew:

He lash'd the coursers, and the coursers flew.

Beneath the bounding yoke alike they held

615 Their equal pace, and smok'd along the field.

The tow'rs of *Pylus* sink, its views decay,

Fields after fields fly back, till close of day:

Then sunk the Sun, and darken'd all the way.

To *Phera* now, *Diocleus*' stately seat,

620 (Of *Alpheus*' race) the weary youths retreat.

His house affords the hospitable rite,

And pleas'd they sleep (the blessing of the night.)

But when *Aurora*, daughter of the dawn,

With rosy lustre purpled o'er the lawn;

to *Lacedæmon*; so that five days have now pass'd since the opening of the Poem. I have said nothing about the sacrifice, tho' it be the most exact description of the sacrifices as practis'd by the Ancients, perhaps extant in any Author; I refer to the observations upon the first book of the *Iliad*.

I would here remark that the three first books are written with the utmost simplicity, there has been no room for such exalted strokes of Poetry as are to be found in the *Iliad*, or in the future parts of the *Odyssey*: But this is not owing to the decay of genius in *Homer*, as some Critics have affirm'd, (who look upon the *Odyssey* as bearing marks of his declining years,) but to the nature of the subject. The characters of *Achilles* and *Ulysses* are both very great, but very different. The *Iliad* consists of battles, and a continual commotion; the *Odyssey* in Patience and Wisdom: and consequently the style of the two Poems must be as different as the characters of the two Heroes. A noble fountain of Poetry opens in the next book, and flows with an uninterrupted course almost thro' the whole *Odyssey*.

Again.

Book III. *HOMER'S ODYSSEY.* 137

625 Again they mount, their journey to renew,
And from the sounding portico they flew.
Along the waving fields their way they hold,
The fields receding as the chariot roll'd:
Then slowly sunk the ruddy globe of light,
630 And o'er the shaded landscape rush'd the night.



THE



*Telemachus is receiv'd at Lacedemon
in y^e Palace of Menelaus with Pisistratus.*



THE
FOURTH BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.





The ARGUMENT.

The Conference with Menelaus.

Telemachus with Pisistratus arriving at Sparta, is hospitably receiv'd by Menelaus, to whom he relates the cause of his coming, and learns from him many particulars of what befel the Greeks since the destruction of Tröy. He dwells more at large upon the Prophecies of Proteus to him in his return, from which he acquaints Telemachus, that Ulysses is detain'd in the Island of Calypso.

In the mean-time the Suitors consult to destroy Telemachus in his voyage home. Penelope is appriz'd of this, but comforted in a dream by Pallas, in the shape of her sister Iphigenia.

T H E

T H E
F O U R T H B O O K
O F T H E
O D Y S S E Y.

AND now proud *Sparta* with their wheels re-
sounds,

Sparta, whose walls a range of hills surrounds:

At the fair dome the rapid labour ends;

Where fat *Atrides* 'midst his bridal friends,

5 With double vows invoking *Hymen's* pow'r,

To bless his sons and daughters nuptial hour.

That

Aristotle in his *Poetics* reports, that certain ancient Critics reproached *Homer* for an indecency in making *Telemachus* take his abode with *Menelaus*, and not with his own grandfather *Icarus*: this *Monsieur Dacier* sufficiently answers, by shewing that *Icarus* had settled himself in *Acarnania*, and not in *Lacedaemon*.

v. 5. — invoking *Hymen's* pow'r.] *Athenaus* has been very severe upon this passage, as *Eusebius* observes, and *Dacier* from *Eusebius*.

Aristar-

That day, to great *Achilles'* son resign'd
Hermione, (the fairest of her kind)

Was

Aristarchus, says *Athenaus*, misguides us, the words τὸν δ' εἶπον *Δαρύστα*, led him into an error; whereas the marriage is completed, the wedded couple gone away from *Menelaus*, and he and *Helen* are alone at *Lacedæmon*. The five verses, continues he, (the fifteenth to the twentieth inclusively) are taken from the eighteenth book of the *Iliads*, and inserted very improperly in this place by *Aristarchus*. *Athenaus* gives several reasons for his opinion, as that music and dancing were very contrary to the severe manners of the *Lacedæmonians*; besides the dance was a *Cretan* dance, how then could it be practis'd among the *Spartans*? The Poet mentions neither the name of the Bard, nor one word of the subject of the songs: neither can the words *μολπὴν ἑξαρχόντες*, be apply'd at all to the Dancers, but to the Musicians; and lastly, it is not to be imagin'd that *Telemachus* and *Pisistratus* should be so unpolite, as not to be at all affected with the music, had there been any, and yet break out into such wonder at the sight of the beauty of the Palace of *Menelaus*. *Aristarchus*, adds he, thought the description of the wedding of the son and daughter of a King was too meanly and concisely describ'd, and therefore made this addition.

But it is easy to refute *Athenaus*, and vindicate *Aristarchus*. *Athenaus* understood *ἀρίστη* and *ἥλο* in the wrong sense, they are of the imperfect, *he was sending*, or *about to send*, and not *had sent*, &c. If the marriage had been absolutely finish'd, why should *Minerva* absent her self from *Menelaus*, when the celebration of the nuptials is the only reason of the absence of that Goddess? and as for music and dancing being contrary to the severe manners of the *Lacedæmonians*, this is all conjecture: *Menelaus* lived more than three hundred years before *Lycorgus*; and because such diversions were forbid in *Sparta* in the days of *Lycorgus*, must it follow that they were not used in those of *Menelaus*? And should it be granted that music and dancing were not used in his times, might he not relax a little from the severity of his times, upon such an occasion of joy as the marriage of a son and daughter? I am sure these diversions are not more contrary to the severity of the *Spartans*, than the magnificence of the Palace of *Menelaus* was to their simplicity. "But he does not name the Bard, or the subject of his songs:" But is this a reason why the verses are spurious? we should rather admire the judgment of the Poet, who having so fair an opportunity to describe these nuptials, yet rejects the temptation, dismisses the whole in a few lines, and follows
 where

Book III. *HOMER'S ODYSSEY.* 143

Was sent to crown the long-protracted joy;

10 Espous'd before the final doom of *Troy*:

With steeds, and gilded cars, a gorgeous train

Attend the nymph to *Phobias*' distant reign.

Mean-while at home, to *Megapenthes*' bed

The virgin-choir *Alecto*'s daughter led.

15 Brave *Megapenthes*, from a stol'n amour

To great *Atrides*' age his hand-maid bore:

To *Helen*'s bed the Gods alone assign

Hermione, t' extend the regal line;

On whom a radiant pomp of Graces wait;

20 Resembling *Venus* in attractive state.

While this gay friendly troop the King surround,

With festival and mirth the roofs resound:

where his subject leads him. The objection about the dance being *Cretan* is not more valid: *Menelaus*. (as we may learn from the preceding book) had been in *Crete*, and might bring it thence to *Lacedaemon*. And as for the Criticism upon *ἐξαρχόντες*, it is but a fallacy; *Cassaubon* has shewn beyond contradiction, that *ἐξαρχόντες* is apply'd indifferently to all those who give example to others; and consequently may be apply'd to Dancers as well as Musicians. It may be further added, that although it should be allow'd that the word *ἐξαρχόντες* is only properly apply'd to music, yet in this place the word would not be improperly apply'd to dancers; for the dancers, without usurping upon the province of the singer, might *μελῶντες ἐξαρχόντες*, or chuse those songs, to which they desired to dance; as is the usage at this day.

Diodorus is of opinion, that the whole twelve lines after the second to the fifteenth are not genuine; but what has been said of *Athenians*, may be apply'd to *Diadorns*.

A Bard

144 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book IV.

A Bard amid the joyous circle sings

High airs, attemper'd to the vocal strings;

25 Whilst warbling to the varied strain, advance

Two sprightly youths to form the bounding dance:

'Twas then, that issuing thro' the palace gate

The splendid car roll'd slow in regal state:

On the bright eminence young *Nestor* shone,

30 And fast beside him great *Ulysses'* son:

Grave *Eteoneus* saw the pomp appear,

And speeding, thus address'd the royal car.

Two youths approach, whose semblant features prove

Their blood devolving from the source of *Jove*.

35 Is due reception deign'd, or must they bend

Their doubtful course to seek a distant friend?

Insensate! with a sigh the King replies,

Too long, mis-judging, have I thought thee wise:

v. 37. Menelaus blames Eteoneus.] This is the first appearance of *Menelaus*; and surely nothing can more reconcile him to the favour of the spectators, than those amiable colours in which the Poet paints him. There is an overflow of humanity and gratitude in his expressions, like that of *Dido* in *Virgil*,

Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.

They contain a fine piece of morality, and teach that those men are more tender-hearted and humane who have felt the reverse of fortune, than those who have only liv'd in a condition of prosperity.

But

Book IV. *HOMER'S ODYSSEY.* 145

- But sure relentless folly steels thy breast,
40 Obdurate to reject the stranger-guest;
To those dear hospitable rites a foe,
Which in my wand'rings oft reliev'd my woe :
Fed by the bounty of another's board,
'Till pitying *Jove* my native realm restor'd——
- 45 Strait be the coursers from the car releast,
Conduct the youths to grace the genial feast.
The Seneshal rebuk'd in haste withdrew;
With equal haste a menial train pursue:
Part led the coursers, from the car enlarg'd,
50 Each to a crib with choicest grain surcharg'd;
Part in a portico, profusely grac'd
With rich magnificence, the chariot plac'd:
Then to the dome the friendly pair invite,
Who eye the dazling roofs with vast delight;
55 Resplendent as the blaze of summer-noon,
Or the pale radiance of the midnight moon.
From room to room their eager view they bend;
Thence to the bath, a beauteous pile, descend;
Where a bright damsel-train attend the guests
60 With liquid odours, and embroider'd vests.
Refresh'd, they wait them to the bow'r of state,
Where circled with his Peers *Atrides* sate:

146 *HOMER'S ODYSSEY*. Book IV.

- Thron'd next the King, a fair attendant brings
 The purest product of the chrystal springs;
 65 High on a massy vase of silver mold,
 The burnish'd laver flames with solid gold;
 In solid gold the purple vintage flows,
 And on the board a second banquet rose.
 When thus the King with hospitable port:—
 70 Accept this welcome to the *Spartan* court;
 The waste of nature let the feast repair,
 Then your high lineage and your names declare:
 Say from what scepter'd ancestry ye claim,
 Recorded eminent in deathless fame?
 75 For vulgar parents cannot stamp their race
 With signatures of such majestic grace.
 Ceasing, benevolent he strait assigns
 The royal portion of the choicest chimes
 To each accepted friend: with grateful haste
 80 They share the honours of the rich repast.
 Suffic'd, soft-whispering thus to *Nestor's* son,
 His head reclin'd, young *Ithacus* begun.

v. 81. *Soft-whispering thus to Nestor's son.*] This may be thought a circumstance of no importance, and very trivial in *Tele-machus*; but it shews his address and decency: He whispers, to avoid the appearance of a flatterer, or to conceal his own inexperience, in shewing too much surprize at the magnificence of the Palace of *Menelaus*. *Enstathius*.

View't

View'st thou un-mov'd, O ever-honour'd most!

These prodigies of art, and wond'rous cost?

85 Above, beneath, around the Palace shines

The sumless treasure of exhausted mines:

The spoils of elephants the roofs inlay,

And studded amber darts a golden ray:

Such, and not nobler, in the realms above

90 My wonder dictates is the dome of *Jove*.

The Monarch took the word, and grave reply'd.

Prefumptuous are the vaunts, and vain the pride

Of man, who dares in pomp with *Jove* contest,

Unchang'd, immortal, and supremely blest!

95 With all my affluence when my woes are weigh'd,

Envy will own, the purchase dearly paid.

v. 91. *The Monarch took the word, &c.*] The ancients, says *Enstathius*, observe the prudence of *Menelaus* in his reply to *Telemachus*; and the prudence of *Telemachus* in his behaviour to *Menelaus*: *Menelaus* denies not his riches and magnificence, but to take off the envy which they might attract, he throws the calamities he has undergone into the contrary scale, and balances his felicity with his misfortunes: And *Telemachus* coming into the Palace at the time of an entertainment, chuses to satisfy his curiosity rather than his appetite. *Plutarch*, I confess, condemns *Telemachus* of inexperience; who when he saw the Palace of *Nestor* furnish'd only with things useful to life, as beds, tables, &c. is seiz'd with no admiration; but the superfluities of *Menelaus*, his ivory, amber and gold, &c. carry him into transports: whereas a *Socrates* or a *Diogenes* would have exclaim'd, What heaps of vanities have I beheld! 'Tis true, such a judgment might become Philosophers; but who, as *Dacier* observes, can think the character of a *Socrates* or a *Diogenes* suitable to young *Telemachus*? What is decent in a Prince, and a young man, would ill become the gravity and wisdom of a Philosopher.

148 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book IV.

For eight slow-circling years by tempests tost,
From *Cyprus* to the far *Phœnician* coast,
(*Sidon* the Capital) I stretch'd my toil

100 Thro' regions fatten'd with the flows of *Nile*.

Next, *Æthiopia's* utmost bound explore,

And the parcht borders of th' *Arabian* shore :

Then warp my voyage on the southern gales,

O'er the warm *Lybian* wave to spread my sails:

105 That happy clime! where each revolving year

The teeming ewes a triple offspring bear ;

And

v. 100. *Thro' regions fatten'd with the flows of Nile.*

Next, Æthiopia, &c.]

The words are in the original *Ἀργυρίῃσι ἐπαλθούς*, others read them *Ἀργυρίῃσι ἐν ἀλυσίῃ*, from their veracity in oracles, for which they were very famous; and indeed the word *ἐπαλθούς* is not necessary, it being used in the very same sentence, tho' it must be confess'd such repetitions are frequent in *Homer*. There is also a different reading of the word *ἐπίμυτος*; some have it *ἐρίμυτος*, or *Blacks*; others, *Σιδωνίῃσι Ἀράβας τε*; but the common reading is thought the best. The *Erembri* are the *Arabian* Troglodytes. *Strabo* informs us, that in former ages the bounds of the *Æthiopians* lay near to *Thebes* in *Egypt*, so that *Menelaus* travelling to *Thebes*, might with ease visit the *Æthiopians*. Others have without any foundation imagin'd that he pass'd the streights of *Gibraltar*, and sail'd to the *Indies*. *Sidon* is the capital of the *Phœnicians*. *Eusebathius*.

v. 105. ———— *Where each revolving year*

The teeming Ewes, &c.]

These sheep, as describ'd by *Homer*, may be thought the creation of the Poet, and not the production of nature: But *Herodotus*, says *Eusebathius*, writes, that in *Scythia* the oxen have no horns thro' the extremity of the cold: He quotes this very verse, rightly intimating, adds *Herodotus*, that in hot regions the horns of cattle shoot very speedily. *Aristotle* directly asserts, that in *Lybia* the young ones of horned cattle have horns immediately after they
are

Book IV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 149

And two fair crescents of translucent horn
 The brows of all their young increase adorn:
 The shepherd swains with sure abundance blest,
 110 On the fat flock and rural dainties feast;
 Nor want of herbage makes the dairy fail,
 But every season fills the foaming pail.
 Whilst heaping unwish'd wealth, I distant roam;
 The best of brothers, at his natal home,

By

are brought into the world. So that *Aristotle* and *Herodotus* vindicate *Homer*. The Poet adds, that the sheep breed three times in the year; these words may have a different interpretation, and imply that they breed in three seasons of the year, and not only in the spring, as in other countries; or that the sheep have at once three lambs; but the first is the better interpretation. *Athenaus* upon this passage writes, that there are things in other countries no less strange than what *Homer* relates of these sheep of *Libya*. Thus in *Lusitania*, a country of *Spain*, now *Portugal*, there is a wonderful fruitfulness in all cattle, by reason of the excellent temper of the air; the fruits there never rot, and the roses, violets and asparagus, never fail above three months in the year. *Enst.*

v. 114. *The best of brothers,*
 ————— *a traitress's wife.*]

Menelaus neither mentions *Agamemnon*, *Clytemnestra*, nor *Egyphus* by name: a just indignation and resentment is the occasion of his suppressing the names of *Clytemnestra* and *Egyphus*. Thro' the whole *Iliad* *Menelaus* is describ'd as a very affectionate brother, and the love he bears *Agamemnon* is the reason why he passes by his name in silence. We see that he dispatches the whole in one verse and a half; *Nestor* had told the story pretty largely in the preceding book, and as he was a person less nearly concern'd, might speak of it with more ease and better temper than *Menelaus*; the Poet avoids a needless repetition, and a repetition too of a story universally known to all the *Greeks*. The death of *Agamemnon* is distributed into four places in the *Odyssey*; *Nestor*, *Menelaus*, *Proteus*, and the shade of *Agamemnon* in the 11th book, all relate it, and every one very properly. *Proteus* as a prophet more

H 3

fully

150 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book IV.

- 115 By the dire fury of a traitress wife,
Ends the sad evening of a stormy life:
Whence with incessant grief my soul annoy'd,
These riches are possess'd, but not enjoy'd!
My wars, the copious theme of ev'ry tongue,
- 120 To you, your fathers have recorded long:
How fav'ring heav'n repaid my glorious toils
With a sack'd Palace, and barbaric spoils.
Oh! had the Gods so large a boon deny'd,
And Life, the just equivalent, supply'd
- 125 To those brave warriors, who, with glory fir'd,
Far from their country in my cause expir'd!

fully than Nestor or Menelaus, and Agamemnon more fully than them all, as being best acquainted with it. *Enstathius*.

v. 119. *My wars, the copious theme, &c.*] In the original *Menelaus* says, *I have destroy'd a house, &c.* There is an ambiguity in the expression, as *Enstathius* observes: for it may either signify the house of Priam, or his own in *Argos*; if it be understood of his own, then the meaning is, "I have indeed great wealth, but have purchas'd it with the loss of my people; I could be content with the third part of it, if I could restore those to life who have perish'd before Troy." If it be understood of the kingdom of Priam, the regret he shews will still appear the greater. He is enumerating his domestic happiness, and his foreign conquest of Troy; but he throws the destruction of so many brave men who fell before it, in the contrary scale; and it so far outweighs both his wealth and his glory, that they both are joyless to him. Either of these interpretations shew an excellent temper of humanity in *Menelaus*, who thinks the effusion of blood too dear a price for glory. At the same time the Poet gives an admirable picture of human nature, which is restless in the pursuit of what it miscalls happiness, and when in possession of it, neglects it. But the disquiet of *Menelaus* arises not from inconstancy of temper, but wisdom; it shews that all happiness is unsatisfactory.

Still

Still in short intervals of pleasing woe,

Regardful of the friendly dues I owe,

I to the glorious dead, for ever dear!

130 Indulge the tribute of a grateful tear.

But oh! *Ulysses*—deeper than the rest

That sad idea wounds my anxious breast!

My heart bleeds fresh with agonizing pain;

The bowl, and tasteful viands tempt in vain,

135 Nor sleep's soft pow'r can close my streaming eyes,

When imag'd to my soul his sorrows rise.

No peril in my cause he ceas'd to prove,

His labours equal'd only by my love:

And both alike to bitter fortune born,

140 For him, to suffer, and for me to mourn!

Whether he wanders on some friendless coast,

Or glides in *Stygian* gloom a pensive ghost,

v. 131. *But oh! Ulysses——&c.*] It is with admirable address that the Poet falls into his subject; it is art, but yet it seems to be nature: This conduct has a double effect, it takes away all suspicion of flattery, for *Menelaus* is ignorant that the person with whom he discourses is *Telemachus*, this gives him a manifest evidence of the love he bears to *Ulysses*; the young man could not but be pleased with the praise of his father, and with the sincerity of it. It is also observable, that *Menelaus* builds his friendship for *Ulysses* upon a noble foundation; I mean the sufferings which *Ulysses* underwent for his friend: *Menelaus* ascribes not their affection to any familiarity or intercourse of entertainments, but to a more sincere cause, to the hazards which brave men undertake for a friend. In short, the friendship of *Menelaus* and *Ulysses* is the friendship of Heroes. *English.*

H 4.

No.

152 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book IV.

- No fame reveals; but doubtful of his doom,
 His good old Sire with sorrow to the tomb
 145 Declines his trembling steps; untimely care
 Withers the blooming vigour of his heir;
 And the chaste partner of his bed and throne,
 Wastes all her widow'd hours in tender moan.
 While thus pathetic to the Prince he spoke,
 150 From the brave youth the streaming passion broke;
 Studious to veil the grief, in vain repress,
 His face he shrowded with his purple vest:
 The conscious Monarch pierc'd the coy disguise,
 And view'd his filial love with vast surprize;
 155 Dubious to press the tender theme, or wait
 To hear the youth enquire his father's fate.

In this suspense bright *Helen* grac'd the room;
 Before her breath'd a gale of rich perfume.

So

v. 157. ———— *Bright Helen grac'd the room.*] *Menelaus* conjectur'd that the person he had entertain'd was the son of *Ulysses*, from the tears he shed at the name of his father, and from the resemblance there was between *Ulysses* and *Telemachus*; it might therefore have been expected that *Menelaus* should immediately have acknowledg'd *Telemachus*, and not delay'd a full discovery one moment, out of regard to his absent friend; but *Menelaus* defers it upon a twofold account, to give some time to *Telemachus* to indulge his sorrow for his father, and recover himself from it, and also to avoid the repetition of a discovery upon the appearance of *Helen*, who would be curious to know the condition of the strangers.

It may be necessary to say something concerning *Helen*, that fatal beauty that engag'd *Greece* and *Asia* in arms; she is drawn in the

Book IV. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 153

- So moves, adorn'd with each attractive grace,
 160 The silver-shafted Goddess of the Chace!
 The feat of majesty *Adraſte* brings,
 With art illuſtrious, for the pomp of Kings.
 To ſpread the pall beneath the regal chair
 Of ſoſteſt woof, is bright *Alcippe's* care.
 165 A ſilver caniſter divinely wrought,
 In her ſoft hands the beauteous *Phylo* brought:
 To *Sparta's* Queen of old the radiant vaſe
Alcandra gave, a pledge of royal grace:
 For *Polybus* her Lord, (whoſe ſov'reign ſway
 170 The wealthy tribes of *Pharian Thebes* obey)
 When to that court *Atides* came, careſt
 With vaſt munificence th' imperial gueſt:

the ſame colours in the *Odyssey* as in the *Iliad*; it is a vicious character, but the colours are ſo admirably ſofter'd by the art of the Poet, that we pardon her infidelity. *Menelaus* is an uncommon inſtance of conjugal affection, he forgives a wife who had been falſe to him, and receives her into a full degree of favour. But perhaps the Reader might have been ſhock'd at it, and prejudiced againſt *Helen* as a perſon that ought to be forgot, or have her name only mention'd to diſgrace it: The Poet therefore, to reconcile her to his Reader, brings her in as a penitent, condemning her own infidelity in very ſtrong expreſſions; ſhe ſhews true modeſty, when ſhe calls herſelf impudent, and by this conduct we are inclin'd, like *Menelaus*, to forgive her.

v. 161, &c. *Adraſte, Alcippe, Helen's Maids.*] It has been obſerv'd, that *Helen* has not the ſame attendants in the *Odyssey* as ſhe had in the *Iliad*; they perhaps might be *Trojans*, and conſequently be left in their own country; or rather, it was an act of prudence in *Menelaus*, not to ſuffer thoſe ſervants about her who had been her attendants and confidents in her infidelity. *Enſt.*

H S

Two

154 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book IV.

Two lavers from the richest ore refin'd,
With silver tripods, the kind host assign'd;

175 And bounteous, from the royal treasure told
Ten equal talents of refulgent gold.

Alcandra, consort of his high command,

A golden distaff gave to *Helen*'s hand;

And that rich vase, with living sculpture wrought;

180 Which heap'd with wool the beauteous *Phylô* brought;

The filken fleece impurpl'd for the loom,

Rival'd the hyacinth in vernal bloom.

The sov'reign seat then *Jove*-born *Helen* press'd,

And pleasing thus her sceptred Lord address'd.

185 Who grace our palace now, that friendly pair,

Speak they their lineage, or their names declare?

Uncertain of the truth, yet uncontroul'd

Hear me the bodings of my breast unfold.

With wonder rapt, on yonder cheek I trace

190 The feature of the *Ulyssæan* race:

Diffus'd o'er each resembling line appear,

In just similitude, the grace and air

Of

v. 192. ————The grace and air

Of young *Telemachus*!

It may seem strange that *Helen* should at first view recollect the features of *Ulysses* in *Telemachus*; and that *Menelaus*, who was her

Book IV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 155

Of young *Telemachus*! the lovely boy,
Who blest'd *Ulysses* with a father's joy,

195 What time the *Greeks* combin'd their social arms,
T' avenge the stain of my ill-fated charms!

Just is thy thought, the King assenting cries,
Methinks *Ulysses* strikes my wond'ring eyes:
Full shines the father in the filial frame,

200 His port, his features, and his shape the same:
Such quick regards his sparkling eyes bestow;
Such wavy ringlets o'er his shoulders flow!
And when he heard the long disastrous store
Of cares, which in my cause *Ulysses* bore;

205 Dismay'd, heart-wounded with paternal woes,
Above restraint the tide of sorrow rose:
Cautious to let the gushing grief appear,
His purple garment veil'd the falling tear.

See there confest, *Pisistratus* replies,

210 The genuine worth of *Ishacus* the wife!
Of that heroic fire the youth is sprung,
But modest awe hath chain'd his tim'rous tongue.

ter acquainted with him, and his constant friend, should not make the same observation. But *Athenas*, to reconcile this to probability, says, that women are curious and skilful observers of the likeness of children to parents, for one particular reason, that they may, upon finding any dissimilitude, have the pleasure of hinting at the unchastity of others.

156 *HOMER'S ODYSSEY*. Book IV.

Thy voice, O King! with pleas'd attention heard,
Is like the dictates of a God rever'd.

- 215 With him at *Nestor's* high command I came,
Whose age I honour with a parent's name.
By adverse destiny constrain'd to sue
For counsel and redress, he sues to you,
Whatever ill the friendless orphan bears,
220 Bereav'd of parents in his infant years,
Still must the wrong'd *Telemachus* sustain;
If hopeful of your aid, he hopes in vain:
Affianc'd in your friendly pow'r alone,
The youth wou'd vindicate the vacant throne.
225 Is *Sparta* blest, and these desiring eyes
View my friends son? (the King exulting cries)
Son of my friend, by glorious toils approv'd,
Whose sword was sacred to the man he lov'd:
Mirror of constant faith, rever'd, and mourn'd! —
230 When *Troy* was ruin'd, had the chief return'd,
No *Greek* an equal space had e'er possess'd
Of dear affection, in my grateful breast.
I, to confirm the mutual joys we shar'd,
For his abode a Capital prepar'd;

Argos

v. 234. *For his abode a Capital prepar'd.*] The Poet puts these words in the-mouth of *Menelaus*, to express the sincerity of his friend-

- 235 *Argos* the seat of sovereign rule I chose;
 Fair in the plan the future palace rose,
 Where my *Ulysses* and his race might reign,
 And portion to his tribes the wide domain.
 To them my vassals had resign'd a soil,
 240 With teeming plenty to reward their toil.
 There with commutual zeal we both had strove
 In acts of dear benevolence, and love:
 Brothers in peace, not rivals in command,
 And death alone dissolv'd the friendly band!
 245 Some envious pow'r the blissful scene destroys;
 Vanish'd are all the visionary joys:
 The soul of friendship to my hope is lost,
 Fated to wander from his natal coast!

He ceas'd; a gust of grief began to rise:

- 250 Fast streams a tide from beauteous *Helen's* eyes;

Fast

friendship to *Ulysses*; he intended him all advantage, and no detriment: we must therefore conclude, that *Ulysses* was still to retain his sovereignty over *Ithaca*, and only remove to *Argos*, to live with so sincere a friend as *Menelaus*. *Enstathius*.

v. 249.—[A gust of grief began to rise, &c.] It has been observ'd through the *Iliad*, and may be observ'd through the whole *Odyssey*, that it was not a disgrace to the greatest Heroes to shed tears; and indeed I cannot see why it should be an honour to any man, to be able to divest himself of human nature so far as to appear insensible upon the most affecting occasions. No man is born a Stoic; it is art, not nature; tears are only a shame, when the cause from whence they flow is mean or vicious. Here *Menelaus* laments a friend, *Telemachus* a father, *Pisistratus* a brother: but from

158 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book IV.

Fast for the Sire the filial sorrows flow;
The weeping Monarch swells the mighty woe:
Thy cheek, *Pisistratus*, the tears bedew,
While pictur'd to thy mind appear'd in view.

255 Thy martial,* Brother: on the *Phrygian* plain.
* *Anti-lochus*. Extended pale, by swarthy *Memnon* slain!
But silence soon the son of *Nestor* broke,
And melting with fraternal pity spoke.

Frequent, O King, was *Nestor* wont to raise:
260 And charm attention, with thy copious praise:
To crown thy various gifts, the sage assign'd
The glory of a firm capacious mind:
With that superior attribute controul:
This unavailing impotence of soul.

265 Let not your roof with echoing grief resound,
Now for the feast the friendly bowl is crown'd:

But

from what cause arise the tears of *Helen*? It is to be remember'd that *Helen* is drawn in the softest colours in the *Odyssey*; the character of the adultress is lost in that of the penitent; the name of *Ulysses* throws her into tears, because she is the occasion of all the sufferings of that brave man; the Poet makes her the first in sorrow, as she is the cause of all their tears.

v. 265. Let not your roof with echoing grief resound,

Now for the feast the friendly bowl is crown'd.]

It may be ask'd why sorrow for the dead should be more unreasonable in the evening than the morning? *Enstathius* answers, lest others should look upon our evening tears as the effect of wine, and not of love to the dead.

Inter-

E

Book IV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 159

But when from dewy shade emerging bright,

Aurora streaks the sky with orient light,

Let each deplore his dead: the rites of woe

270 Are all, alas! the living can bestow:

O'er the congenial dust injoin'd to shear

The graceful curl, and drop the tender tear.

Then mingling in the mournful pomp with you,

I'll pay my brother's ghost a warrior's due,

275 And mourn the brave *Antilochus*, a name

Not unrecorded in the rolls of fame:

With strength and speed superior form'd, in fight

To face the foe, or intercept his flight:

Too early snatch'd by fate ere known to me!

280 I boast a witness of his worth in thee.

Young and mature! the Monarch thus rejoins,

In thee renew'd the soul of *Nestor* shines:

Form'd by the care of that consummate sage,

In early bloom an Oracle of age.

Intempestiores venit inter pocula fletus.

Nec lacrymas dulcis fas est miscere falerino.

I fancy there may be a more rational account given of this expression; The time of feasting was ever look'd upon as a time of joy and thanksgiving to the Gods; it bore a religious veneration among the Ancients, and consequently to shed tears when they should express their gratitude to the Gods with joy, was esteem'd a profanation.

When

285 When-e'er his influence *Jove* vouchsafes to show'r

To bless the natal, and the nuptial hour;

From the great fire transmissive to the race,

The boon devolving gives distinguish'd grace.

Such, happy *Nestor*! was thy glorious doom;

290 Around thee full of years, thy offspring bloom;

Expert of arms, and prudent in debate;

The gifts of heav'n to guard thy hoary state.

But now let each becalm his troubled breast.

Wash, and partake serene the friendly feast.

295 To move thy suit, *Telemachus*, delay,

'Till heav'n's revolving lamp restores the day.

He said, *Asphalion* swift the laver brings;

Alternate all partake the grateful springs:

Then from the rites-of purity repair,

300 And with keen gust the sav'ry viands share.

Mean-time with genial joy to warm the soul,

Bright *Helen* mix'd a mirth-inspiring bowl:

Temper'd

v. 302. *Bright Helen mix'd a mirth-inspiring bowl, &c.*] The conjectures about this cordial of *Helen* have been almost infinite. Some take *Nepenthes* allegorically, to signify History, Music, or Philosophy. *Plutarch* in the first of the *Symposiastes* affirms it to be, discourse well suiting the present passions and conditions of the hearers. *Macrobius* is of the same opinion, *Delinimentum illud quod Helena vino miscuit, non herba fuit, non ex Indiâ succus, sed narrandi opportunitas, quæ hospitem morosis oblitum flexit ad gaudium*. What gave a foundation to this fiction of *Homer*, as *Dacier* observes, might be this. *Diodorus* writes that in *Egypt*, and chief-

ly

Book IV. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 161

Temper'd with drugs of sov'reign use, t'assuage
The boiling bosom of tumultuous Rage;

To

ly at *Heliopolis*, the same with *Thebes* where *Menelaus* sojourn'd, as has been already observ'd, there liv'd women who boasted of certain potions, which not only made the unfortunate forget all their calamities, but drove away the most violent sallies of grief or anger. *Eusebius* directly affirms, that even in his time the women of *Diospolis* were able to calm the rage of grief or anger by certain potions. Now whether this be truth or fiction, it fully vindicates *Homer*, since a Poet may make use of a prevailing, tho' false, opinion.

Milton mentions this *Nepenthes* in his excellent Masque of *Comus*,

—Behold this cordial Julep here,
That flames and dances in his chrystal bounds!
Not that *Nepenthes* which the wife of *Thone*
In *Aegypt* gave to Jove-born *Helena*,
Is of such pow'r as this to stir up joy,
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.

But that there may be something more than fiction in this is very probable, since the *Egyptians* were so notoriously skill'd in physick; and particularly since this very *Thon*, or *Thonis*, or *Thoon*, is reported by the ancients to have been the inventor of physic among the *Egyptians*. The description of this *Nepenthes* agrees admirably with what we know of the qualities and effects of *Opium*.

It is further said of *Thon*, that he was King of *Canopus*, and entertain'd *Menelaus* hospitably before he had seen *Helen*; but afterwards falling in love with her, and offering violence, he was slain by *Menelaus*. From his name the *Egyptians* gave the name of *Thoth* to the first month of their year, and also to a city the name of *Thonis*. *Ælian* writes, that *Menelaus*, when he travell'd to the *Æthiopians*, committed *Helen* to the protection of *Thonis*; that she fell in love with him, that *Polydamna* growing jealous confin'd her to the Island *Pharos*, but gave her an herb to preserve her from the poison of serpents there frequent, which from *Helen* was call'd *Helenium*. *Strabo* writes, that at *Canopus* on the mouth of *Nile* there stands a city named *Thonies*, from King *Thonis*, who receiv'd *Helen* and *Menelaus*. *Herodotus* relates, that *Thonis* was Governour of *Canopus*, that he represented the injury which *Paris* had done to *Menelaus*, to *Proteus* who reign'd in *Memphis*. *Eusebius*.

This

- 305 To clear the cloudy front of wrinkled Care,
 And dry the tearful sluices of Despair:
 Charm'd with that virtuous draught, th'exalted mind
 All sense of woe delivers to the wind.
 Tho' on the blazing pile his parent lay,
 310 Or a lov'd brother groan'd his life away,
 Or darling son oppress'd by ruffian-force
 Fell breathless at his feet, a mangled corse,
 From morn to eve, impassive and serene,
 The man entranc'd wou'd view the deathful scene.
- 315 These drugs, so friendly to the joys of life,
 Bright *Helen* learn'd from *Thone's* imperial wife;
 Who sway'd the sceptre, where prolific *Nile*
 With various simples cloaths the fat'n'd soil.
 With wholesome herbage mix'd, the direful bane
 320 Of vegetable venom, taints the plain;
 From *Paon* sprung, their patron-god imparts
 To all the *Pharian* race his healing arts.
 The beverage now prepar'd t'inspire the feast,
 The circle thus the beauteous Queen address.

This last remark from *Herodotus* is sufficient to shew, that *Homer* is not so fictitious as is generally imagined, that there really was a King named *Proteus*, that the Poet builds his fables upon truth, and that it was truth that originally determin'd *Homer* to introduce *Proteus* into his Poetry; but I intend to explain this more largely in the story of *Proteus*.

Thron'd.

325 Thron'd in omnipotence, supremest *Jove*

Tempers the fates of human race above;

By the firm sanction of his sov'reign will,

Alternate are decreed our good and ill.

To feastful mirth be this white hour assign'd,

330 And sweet discourse, the banquet of the mind.

My self assisting in the social joy,

Will tell *Ulysses'* bold exploit in *Troy*:

Sole witness of the deed I now declare;

Speak you, (who saw) his wonders in the war.

335 Seam'd o'er with wounds, which his own sabre gave

In the vile habit of a village slave,

The

v. 331. *My self*——

Will tell Ulysses' bold exploit——]

What is here related shews the necessity of the introduction of *Helen*, and the use the Poet makes of it: she is not brought in merely as a *mata persona*, to fill up the number of persons; but she relates several incidents, in which she herself was concern'd, and which she could only know; and consequently not only diversifies, but carries on the design of the story. *Enstathius*.

v. 335. *Seam'd o'er with wounds, &c.*] The Poet here shews his judgment in passing over many instances of the sufferings of *Ulysses*, and relating this piece of conduct, not mention'd by any other Author. The art of *Ulysses* in extricating himself from difficulties is laid down as the groundwork of the Poem, he is *πολύτροπος*, and this is an excellent example of it. This further shews the necessity of the appearance of *Helen*, no other person being acquainted with the story. If this stratagem be not a reality, yet it bears the resemblance of it; and *Megabysus* the *Persian* (as *Enstathius* observes) practis'd it, as we learn from history. We may reasonably conjecture that *Ulysses* was committed to *Helen*, in hopes that he would discover the affairs of the army more freely to her than any other person: for what could be more agreeable to a *Greek*, than to be committed to the care of a *Greek*, as *Ulysses* was

The foe deceiv'd, he pass'd the tented plain,

In *Troy* to mingle with the hostile train.

In this attire secure from searching eyes,

340 'Till haply piercing thro' the dark disguise

The chief I challeng'd; he, whose practis'd wit

Knew all the serpent-mazes of deceit,

Eludes my search: but when his form I view'd

Fresh from the bath with fragrant oils renew'd,

345 His limbs in military purple dress'd;

Each brightning grace the genuine *Greek* confess'd.

A previous pledge of sacred faith obtain'd,

'Till he the lines and *Argive* fleet regain'd

To keep his stay conceal'd; the chief declar'd

350 The plans of war against the town prepar'd.

to *Helen*? By the same conduct the Poet raises the character of *Helen*, by making her shew her repentance by an act of generosity to her countryman. The original says she gave an oath to *Ulysses* not to discover him before he was in safety in the *Grecian* army: Now this does not imply that she ever discover'd to the *Trojans* that *Ulysses* had enter'd *Troy*: the contrary opinion is most probable; for it cannot be imagin'd but all *Troy* must have been incens'd greatly against her, had they known that she had conceal'd one of their mortal enemies, and dismiss'd him in safety: It was sufficient for *Ulysses* to take her oath that she would not discover him, 'till he was in security: he left her future conduct to her own discretion. It is probable that she furnish'd *Ulysses* with a sword, for in his return he slew many *Trojans*: He came to *Troy*, observes *Eustathius*, in rags, and like a slave; and to have conceal'd a sword, would have endanger'd his life upon a discovery of it, and given strong suspicions of an impostor.

Explo-

Exploring then the secrets of the state,
He learn'd what best might urge the *Dardan* fate;
And safe returning to the *Grecian* host,
Sent many a shade to *Pluto's* dreary coast.

355 Loud grief resounded thro' the tow'rs of *Troy*,
But my pleas'd bosom glow'd with secret joy:
For then with dire remorse, and conscious shame,
I view'd th' effects of that disastrous flame,
Which kindled by th' imperious Queen of love,
360 Constrain'd me from my native realm to rove:
And oft in bitterness of soul deplor'd
My absent daughter, and my dearer Lord;

v. 351. *Exploring then the secrets of the state.*] The word *σπένει* is here used in a large sense: it takes in all the observations *Ulysses* made during his continuance in *Troy*, it takes in the designs and counsels of the enemy, his measuring the gates, the height of the walls, the easiest plan for an assault or ambush, the taking away the *Palladium*, or whatever else a wise man may be suppos'd to observe, or act, in execution of such a stratagem. *Enstathius*.

v. 357. *For then with dire remorse, &c.*] The conclusion of this speech is very artful: *Helen* ascribes her seduction to *Venus*, and mentions nothing of *Paris*. Instead of naming *Troy*, she conceals it, and only says she was carry'd thither, leaving *Troy* to the imagination of *Menelaus*; she suffers not herself to mention names so odious now to herself, and ever to *Menelaus*, as *Paris* and *Troy*. She compliments *Menelaus* very handsomely, and says, that he wanted no accomplishment either in mind or body: It being the nature of man not to resent the injuries of a wife so much upon the account of her being corrupted, but of the preference she gives to another person; he looks upon such a preference as the most affecting part of the injury. *Enstathius*.

Admir'd

166 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book IV.

Admir'd among the first of human race,
For ev'ry gift of mind, and manly grace.

365 Right well, reply'd the King, your speech displays
The matchless merit of the chief you praise:
Heroes in various climes my self have found,
For martial deeds, and depth of thought renown'd;
But *Ishacus*, unrival'd in his claim,

370 May boast a title to the loudest fame:
In battel calm he guides the rapid storms,
Wise to resolve, and patient to perform.
What wond'rous conduct in the chief appear'd,
When the vast fabric of the Steed we rear'd!

375 Some Dæmon anxious for the Trojan doom,
Urg'd you with great *Deiphobus* to come,

T'explore

v. 365. *Menelaus's answer.*] The judgment of the Poet in continuing the story concerning *Ulysses* is not observ'd by any Commentator. *Ulysses* is the chief Heroe of the Poem, every thing should have a reference to him, otherwise the narration stands still without any advance towards the conclusion of it. The Poet therefore to keep *Ulysses* in our minds, dwells upon his sufferings and adventures: he supplies his not appearing in the present scene of action, by setting his character before us, and continually forcing his prudence, patience, and valour upon our observation. He uses the same art and judgment with relation to *Achilles* in the *Iliads*: The Heroe of the Poem is absent from the chief scenes of action during much of the time which that Poem comprises, but he is continually brought into the mind of the Reader, by recounting his exploits and glory.

v. 375. *Some Dæmon anxious for the Trojan doom.*] It is the observation of *Eustathius*, that these words are very artfully introduced to vindicate *Helen*; They imply that what she acted was by compul-

T' explore the fraud; with guile oppos'd to guile,
Slow-pacing thrice around th' infidious pile;

Each

compulsion, and to evidence this more clearly, *Deiphobus* is given her for an attendant as a spy upon her actions, that she might not conceal any thing that should happen, but act her part well, by endeavouring to deceive the *Greeks* in favour of *Troy*. It is the *Dæmon*, not *Helen*, that is in fault; this, continues *Enslathius*, answers many objections that lye against *Helen*: for if she was a real penitent, as she her self affirms, how comes she to endeavour to deceive the *Greeks*, by the disguise of her voice, into more misery than had yet arisen from a ten years war? Or indeed is it credible that any person could modulate her voice so artfully as to resemble so many voices? And how could the *Greeks* enclosed in the wooden horse believe that their wives who were in *Greece*, could be arriv'd in so short a space as they had been conceal'd there, from the various regions of *Greece*, and meet together in *Troy*? Would the wives of these Heroes come into an enemy's country when the whole army, except these latent Heroes, were retir'd from it? this is ridiculous and impossible. I must confess there is great weight in these objections: But *Enslathius* answers all by the interposition of the *Dæmon*; and by an idle tradition that *Helen* had the name of *Echo*, from the faculty of mimicking sounds; and that this gift was bestow'd upon her by *Venus* when she married *Menelaus*, that she might be able to detect him, if he should prove false to her bed, by imitating the voice of the suspected person: (but *Menelaus* had more occasion for this faculty than *Helen*.) As for the excuse of the *Dæmon*, it equally excuses all crimes: For instance, was *Helen* false to *Menelaus*? The *Dæmon* occasion'd it: Does she act an imposture to destroy all her *Græcian* friends, and even *Menelaus*? The *Dæmon* compels her to it: The *Dæmon* compels her to go with *Deiphobus*, to surround the horse thrice, to sound the sides of it, to endeavour to surprize the latent *Greeks* by an imitation of the voices of their wives, and in short, to act like a person that was very sincere in mischief.

Dacier takes another course, and gives up *Helen*, but remarks the great address of *Menelaus*. *Helen* had, said she, long desired nothing so much as to return to *Lacedæmon*; and her heart had long been wholly turn'd to *Menelaus*: *Menelaus* is not at all convinc'd of this pretended sincerity; but it would have been too gross, after he had taken her again to his bed, to convict her of falshood: He therefore contents himself barely to reply, that some *Dæmon*, an enemy to the *Greeks*, had forc'd her to a conduct disagreeable

168 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book IV.

Each noted leader's name you thrice invoke,
 380 Your accent varying as their spouses spoke:
 The pleasing sounds each latent warrior warm'd,
 But most *Tydidēs*' and my heart alarm'd :
 To quit the steed we both impatient press,
 Threat'ning to answer from the dark recess.

to her sincerity. This (continues *Dacier*) is an artful, but severe Irony.

As for the objection concerning the impossibility of the *Greeks* believing their wives could be in *Troy*; she answers, that the Authors of this objection have not sufficiently consider'd human nature. The voice of a belov'd person might of a sudden, and by surprize, draw from any person a word involuntary, before he has time to make reflection. This undoubtedly is true, where circumstances make an imposture probable; but here is an impossibility; it is utterly impossible to believe the wives of these Heroes could be in *Troy*. Besides, *Menelaus* himself tells us, that even he had fallen into the snare, but *Ulysses* prevented it; this adds to the incredibility of the story; for if this faculty of mimicry was given upon his marriage with *Helen*, it was nothing new to him, he must be suppos'd to be acquainted with it, and consequently be the less liable to surprize: Nay it is not impossible, but the experiment might have been made upon him before *Helen* fled away with *Paris*.

In short, I think this passage wants a further vindication: the circumstances are low, if not incredible. *Virgil*, the great imitator of *Homer*, has given us a very different and more noble description of the destruction of *Troy*: he has not thought fit to imitate him in this description.

If we allow *Helen* to act by compulsion, to have fear'd the *Trojans*, and that *Deiphobus* was sent as a spy upon her actions; yet this is no vindication of her conduct: she still acts a mean part, and thro' fear becomes an accomplice in endeavouring to betray and ruin the *Greeks*.

I shall just add, that after the death of *Paris*, *Helen* married *Deiphobus*; that the story of the wooden horse is probably founded upon the taking of *Troy* by an engine call'd a Horse, as the like engine was call'd a Ram by the *Romans*.

Unmov'd

- 385 Unmov'd the mind of *Ishacus* remain'd,
 And the vain ardors of our love restrain'd:
 But *Anticlus* unable to controul,
 Spoke loud the languish of his yerning soul:
Ulysses strait with indignation fir'd,
 390 (For so the common care of *Greece* requir'd)
 Firm to his lips his forceful hands apply'd,
 'Till on his tongue the flutt'ring murmurs dy'd:
 Mean-time *Minerva* from the fraudulent horse,
 Back to the Court of *Priam* bent your course.
 395 Inclement fate! *Telemachus* replies,
 Frail is the boasted attribute of wise:
 The leader, mingling with the vulgar host,
 Is in the common mass of matter lost!
 But now let sleep the painful waste repair
 400 Of sad reflection, and corroding care.
 He ceas'd; the menial fair that round her wait,
 At *Helen's* beck prepare the room of state:
 Beneath an ample Portico, they spread
 The downy fleece to form the slumbrous bed;
 405 And o'er soft palls of purple grain unfold
 Rich tapestry, stiff with inwoven gold:
 Then thro' th' illumin'd dome, to balmy rest
 Th' obsequious Herald guides each princely guest:

170 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book IV.

- While to his regal bow'r the King ascends,
 410 And beauteous *Heleu* on her Lord attends.
 Soon as the morn, in orient purple dress,
 Unbarr'd the portal of the roseate East
 The Monarch rose; magnificent to view,
 Th' imperial mantle o'er his vest he threw;
 415 The glitt'ring zone athwart his shoulder cast
 A starry fauchion low-depending grac'd.
 Clasp'd on his feet th' embroider'd sandals shine,
 And forth he moves, majestic and divine:
 Instant to young *Telemachus* he press'd,
 420 And thus benevolent his speech address'd.
 Say, royal youth, sincere of soul report
 What cause hath led you to the *Spartan* court?
 Do public or domestic cares constrain
 This toilsome voyage o'er the fery main?
 425 O highly favour'd delegate of *Jove*!
 (Replies the Prince) inflam'd with filial love,
 And anxious hope, to hear my parent's doom,
 A suppliant to your royal court I come.
 Our sovereign seat a lewd usurping race
 430 With lawless riot, and mis-rule disgrace;
 To pamper'd insolence devoted fall
 Prime of the flock, and choicest of the stall:

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For wild ambition wings their bold desire,
And all to mount th' imperial bed aspire.

435 But prostrate I implore, oh King! relate
The mournful series of my father's fate:
Each known disaster of the Man disclose,
Born by his mother to a world of woes!
Recite them! nor in erring pity fear

440 To wound with storied grief the filial ear:
If e'er *Ulysses*, to reclaim your right,
Avow'd his zeal in council or in fight,
If *Phrygian* camps the friendly toils attest,
To the fire's merit give the son's request.

445 Deep from his inmost soul *Atrides* sigh'd,
And thus indignant to the Prince reply'd:
Heav'ns! wou'd a soft, inglorious, dastard train
An absent hero's nuptial joys profane!

So

v. 447. *Heav'ns! would a soft, inglorious, dastard train.*] *Mene-laus* is fir'd with indignation at the injuries offer'd his friend by the Suitors: he breaks out into an exclamation, and in a just contempt vouchsafes not to mention them: he thinks he fully distinguishes whom he intends, by calling them ἀνδρες αὐτοὶ *those cowards*. The comparison which he introduces is very just, they are the Fawns, *Ulysses* is the Lion.

This is the first Simile that *Homer* has inserted in the *Odyssey*; but I cannot think it proceeded from a barrenness of invention, or thro' phlegm in the declension of his years, as some have imagin'd. The nature of the Poem requires a difference of stile from the *Iliad*: The *Iliad* rushes along like a torrent; the *Odyssey* flows gently on like a deep stream, with a smooth tranquillity: *Achilles* is all fire, *Ulysses* all wisdom.

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So with her young, amid the woodland shades

450 A tim'rous hind the lion's court invades,

Leaves in that fatal laire the tender fawns,

Climbs the green cliff, or feeds the flow'ry lawns:

Mean-time return'd, with dire remorseless sway

The monarch-savage rends the trembling prey.

455 With equal fury, and with equal fame,

Ulysses soon shall re-assert his claim.

O *Jove*, supreme, whom Gods and men revere!

Apol- And * thou, to whom 'tis giv'n to gild the sphere!

With pow'r congenial join'd, propitious aid

460 The chief adopted by the martial maid!

Such to our wish the warrior soon restore,

As when contending on the *Lesbian* shore

His

The Simile in *Homer* is really beautiful; but in *Hobbs* ridiculous.

As when a stag and hind ent'ring the den

Of th' absent Lion, lulls his whelps with tales,

Of hills and dales; the Lion comes agen,

And tears them into pieces with his nails.

Can any thing be more foreign to the sense of *Homer*, or worse translated? He construes *ἀνὰ μὲν ἱερίων*, by telling stories of hills and dales to the Lion's whelps, instead of *Juga investigat*: but such mistakes are so frequent in *Hobbs*, that one would almost suspect his learning in *Greek*: he has disgraced the best Poet, and a very great Historian; *Homer*, and *Thucydides*.

v. 462. *As when contending on the Lesbian shore.*] The Poet here gives an account of one of *Ulysses's* adventures. *Philomelides* was King of *Lesbos*, and *Eustathius* observes, that there was a tradition that *Ulysses* and *Diomedes* slew him, and turn'd a stately

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- His prowess *Philomelides* confess'd,
 And loud-acclaiming *Greeks* the victor blest'd:
 465 Then soon th'invaders of his bed and throne,
 Their love presumptuous shall with life atone.
 With patient ear, oh royal youth, attend
 The storied labours of thy father's friend:
 Fruitful of deeds, the copious tale is long.
 470 But truth severe shall dictate to my tongue:
 Learn what I heard the sea-born Seer relate,
 Whose eye can pierce the dark recess of fate.
 Long on th' *Ægyptian* coast by calms confin'd,
 Heav'n to my fleet refus'd a prosp'rous wind:
 475 No vows had we prefer'd, nor victim slain!
 For this the Gods each fav'ring gale restrain.
 Jealous, to see their high behests obey'd,
 Severe, if men th'eternal rights evade!
 High o'er a gulphy sea, the *Pharian* Isle
 480 Fronts the deep roar of disemboguing Nile:

Her

monument he had rais'd for himself into a public place for the reception of strangers.

v. 479. — *The Pharian Isle*] This description of *Pharos* has given great trouble to the Critics and Geographers; it is generally concluded, that the distance of *Pharos* is about seven Stadia from *Alexandria*; *Ammianus Marcellinus* mentions this very passage thus, lib. 22. *Insula Pharos, ubi Protea cum Phocæarum gregibus diversatums Homerus fabulatur inflatus; a civitatis littore mille passibus disparata*, or, about a mile distant from the shores. How then comes *Homer* to affirm it to be distant a full day's sail? *Dacier* answers, that

Homer

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Her distance from the shore, the course begun
At dawn, and ending with the setting sun,
A gally measures; when the stiffer gales
Rise on the poop, and fully stretch the sails.

Homer might have heard that the *Nile*, continually bringing down much earthy substance, had enlarg'd the continent: and knowing it not to be so distant in his time, took the liberty of a Poet, and describ'd it as still more distant in the days of *Menelaus*. But *Dacier* never sees a mistake in *Homer*. Had his Poetry been worse if he had describ'd the real distance of *Pharos*? It is allowable in a Poet to disguise the truth, to adorn his story; but what ornament has he given his Poetry by this enlargement? *Bochart* has fully prov'd that there is no accession to the Continent from any substance that the *Nile* brings down with it: the violent agitation of the seas prohibit it from lodging, and forming itself into solidity. *Eratoſthenes* is of opinion, that *Homer* was ignorant of the mouths of *Nile*: but *Strabo* answers, that his silence about them is not an argument of his ignorance, for neither has he ever mention'd where he was born. But *Strabo* does not enter fully into the meaning of *Eratoſthenes*: *Eratoſthenes* does not mean that *Homer* was ignorant of the mouths of *Nile* from his silence, but because he places *Pharos* at the distance of a whole day's sail from the Continent. The only way to unite this inconsistency is to suppose, that the Poet intended to specify the *Pelasgic* mouth of *Nile*, from which *Pharos* stands about a day's sail: but this is submitted to the Critics.

I can't tell whether one should venture to make use of the word *Nile* in the translation, it is doubtless an Anachronism; that name being unknown in the times of *Homer* and *Menelaus*, when the *Nile* was call'd *Egyptus*. *Homer* in this very book,

Ἀργυρόλοισι δὲ ἄρτιος ἠντομῶο.

Yet on the other hand, this name of *Egyptus* is so little known, that a common Reader would scarce distinguish the river from the country; and indeed universal custom has obtain'd for using the *Latin* name instead of the *Grecian*, in many other instances which are equally Anachronisms. Witness all the names of the Gods and Goddesses throughout *Homer*. *Jupiter* for *Zeus*, *Juno* for *Erè*, *Neptune* for *Poseidon*, &c.

There

- 485 There anchor'd vessels safe in harbour lye,
 Whilst limpid springs the failing cask supply.
 And now the twentieth sun descending, laves
 His glowing axle in the western waves;
 Still with expanded sails we court in vain
 490 Propitious winds, to waft us o'er the main:
 And the pale mariner at once deplores
 His drooping vigour, and exhausted stores.
 When lo! a bright carulean form appears,
 The fair *Eidothea*! to dispel my fears;
 495 *Proteus* her fire divine. With pity press'd,
 Me sole the daughter of the deep address'd;
 What-time, with hunger pin'd, my absent mates
 Roam the wild Isle in search of rural cates,
 Bait the barb'd steel, and from the fishy flood
 500 Appease th' afflictive fierce desire of food.

Whoe'er

v. 499. *Bait the barb'd steel, and from the fishy flood.*] *Memorians* says, hunger was so violent among his companions, that they were compell'd to eat fish. *Plutarch* in his *Symposiasts* observes, that among the *Egyptians*, *Syrians*, and *Greeks*, to abstain from fish was esteem'd a piece of sanctity; that tho' the *Greeks* were encamp'd upon the *Hellestons*, there is not the least intimation that they eat fish, or any sea-provision; and that the companions of *Ulysses*, in the 12th book of the *Odyssey*, never sought for fish till all their other provisions were consum'd, and that the same necessity compell'd them to eat the herds of the Sun which induced them to taste fish. No fish is ever offer'd in sacrifice: The *Pythagoreans* in particular command fish not to be eaten more strictly than any other animal: Fish afford no excuse at all for their destruction,

Whoe'er thou art, (the azure Goddess cries,)

Thy conduct ill deserves the praise of wise:

Is death thy choice, or misery thy boast,

That here inglorious on a barren coast

505 Thy brave associates droop, a meagre train

With famine pale, and ask thy care in vain?

Struck with the kind reproach, I strait reply;

Whate'er thy title in thy native sky,

A Goddess sure! for more than mortal grace

510 Speaks thee descendent of ethereal race:

Deem not, that here of choice my fleet remains;

Some heav'nly pow'r averse my stay constrains:

O, piteous of my fate, vouchsafe to shew,

(For what's sequester'd from celestial view?)

515 What pow'r becalms th' innavigable seas?

What guilt provokes him, and what vows appease?

I ceas'd, when affable the Goddess cry'd;

Observe, and in the truths I speak confide:

Th' oraculous Seer frequents the *Pharian* coast,

520 From whose high bed my birth divine I boast:

they live as it were in another world, disturb not our air, consume not our fruits, or injure the waters; and therefore the *Pythagoreans*, who were unwilling to offer violence to any animals, fed very little, or not at all on fishes. I thought it necessary to insert this from *Plutarch*, because it is an observation that explains other passages in the sequel of the *Odyssey*.

Proteus,

Proteus, a name tremendous o'er the main,
The delegate of *Neptune's* watry reign.
Watch with insidious care his known abode;
There fast in chains constrain the various God:

v. 521. *Proteus, a name tremendous o'er the main.*] *Enstathius* enumerates various opinions concerning *Proteus*; some understand *Proteus* allegorically to signify the first matter which undergoes all changes; others make him an emblem of true friendship, which ought not to be settled till it has been try'd in all shapes: others make *Proteus* a picture of a flatterer, who takes up all shapes, and suits himself to all forms, in compliance to the temper of the person whom he courts. The *Greeks* (observes *Diodorus*) imagin'd all these metamorphoses of *Proteus* to have been borrow'd from the practices of the *Egyptian* Kings, who were accusom'd to wear the figures of Lions, Bulls or Dragons in their diadems, as emblems of Royalty, and sometimes that of Trees, &c. not so much for ornament as terror: Others took *Proteus* to be an enchanter; and *Enstathius* recounts several that were eminent in this art, as *Cratisthenes* the *Phliasian*, (which *Dacier* renders by mistake *Callisthenes* the *Physician*) who when he pleas'd could appear all on fire, and assume other appearances to the astonishment of the spectators: such also was *Xenophon*, *Scymnus* of *Tarentum*, *Philippides* of *Syracuse*, *Heracitus* of *Mitylene*, and *Nymphodorus*, all practisers of magical arts; and *Enstathius* recites that the *Phoca* were made use of in their Incantations. Some write that *Proteus* was an *Egyptian* tumbler, who could throw himself into variety of figures and postures; others, a Stage-player; others, that he was a great General, skill'd in all the arts and stratagems of war: *Dacier* looks upon him to have been an enchanter, or *Σαμαρομαντεῖς*. 'Tis certain from *Herodotus*, that there was in the times of *Menelaus* a King named *Proteus*, who reign'd in *Memphis*; that *Egypt* was always remarkable for those who excell'd in magical Arts; thus *Jannes* and *Jambres* chang'd, at least in appearance, a rod into a Serpent, and water into blood: It is not therefore improbable but that *Menelaus* hearing of him while he was in *Egypt*, went to consult him as an Enchanter, which kind of men always pretended to fore-know events: This perhaps was the real foundation of the whole story concerning *Proteus*; the rest is the fiction and embellishment of the Poet, who ascribes to his *Proteus* whatever the credulity of men usually ascribes to Enchanters.

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- 25 Who bound, obedient to superior force,
Unerring will prescribe your destin'd course.
If studious of your realms, you then demand
Their state, since last you left your natal land;
Instant the God obsequious will disclose
- 30 Bright tracks of glory, or a cloud of woes,
She ceas'd, and suppliant thus I made reply;
O Goddess! on thy aid my hopes rely:
Dictate propitious to my dutious ear,
What arts can captivate the changeful Scer?
- 35 For perilous th'assay, unheard the toil,
T' elude the prescience of a God by guile.
Thus to the Goddess mild my suit I end:
Then she. Obedient to my rule, attend;
When thro' the Zone of heav'n the mounted sun
- 40 Hath journey'd half, and half remains to run;
The Scer, while Zephyrs curl the swelling deep,
Basks on the breezy shore, in grateful sleep,
His oozy limbs. Emerging from the wave,
The *Phoca* swift surround his rocky cave,
- 45 Frequent and full; the consecrated train
Of * her, whose azure trident awes the main:
There wallowing warm, th' enormous herd exhales
An oily steam, and taints the noon-tide gales.

To

- To that recess, commodious for surprize,
 550 When purple light shall next suffuse the skies,
 With me repair; and from thy warrior band
 Three chosen chiefs of dauntless soul command:
 Let their auxiliar force befriend the toil,
 For strong the God, and perfected in guile.
 555 Stretch'd on the shelly shore, he first surveys
 The flouncing herd ascending from the seas;
 Their number summ'd, repos'd in sleep profound
 The scaly charge their guardian God surround:
 So with his batt'ring flocks the careful swain
 560 Abides, pavilion'd on the grassy plain.
 With pow'rs united, obstinately bold
 Invade him, couch'd amid the scaly fold:
 Instant he wears, elusive of the rape,
 The mimic force of every savage shape:
 565 Or glides with liquid lapse a murm'ring stream,
 Or wrapt in flame, he glows at every limb.
 Yet still retentive, with redoubled might
 Thro' each vain passive form constrain his flight.
 But when, his native shape resum'd, he stands
 570 Patient of conquest, and your cause demands;

The

v. 569. *But when, his native shape resum'd, &c.*] This is founded upon the practice of Enchanters, who never give their answers,

The cause that urg'd the bold attempt declare,
And sooth the vanquish'd with a victor's pray'r.

The bands relax'd, implore the Seer to say
What Godhead interdicts the wat'ry way?

575 Who strait propitious, in prophetic strain
Will teach you to repass th' unmeasur'd main,
She ceas'd, and bounding from the shelfy shore,
Round the descending nymph the waves redounding roar.

High rapt in wonder of the future deed,

580 With joy impetuous, to the port I speed:
The wants of nature with repast suffice,
'Till night with grateful shade involv'd the skies,
And shed ambrosial dews. Fast by the deep,
Along the tented shore, in balmy sleep

585 Our cares were lost. When o'er the eastern lawn,
In saffron robes the Daughter of the dawn
Advanc'd her rosy steps; before the bay,
Due ritual honours to the Gods I pay:
Then seek the place the sea-born nymph assign'd,

590 With three associates of undaunted mind.
Arriv'd, to form along th'appointed strand
For each a bed, she scoops the hilly sand:

swers, till they have astonish'd the imagination of those who consult them with their juggling delusions. *Dacier.*

Then

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Then from her azure car, the finny spoils
Of four vast *Phoca* takes, to veil her wiles;

595 Beneath the finny spoils extended prone,
Hard toil! the prophet's piercing eye to shun;
New from the corse, the scaly frauds diffuse
Unfavoury stench of oil, and brackish ooze:
But the bright sea-maid's gentle pow'r implor'd,
600 With nectar'd drops the sick'ning sense restor'd.

Thus 'till the sun had travell'd half the skies,
Ambush'd we lie, and wait the bold emprise:
When thronging thick to bask in open air,
The flocks of Ocean to the strand repair:
605 Couch'd on the sunny sand, the monsters sleep:
Then *Proteus* mounting from the hoary deep,
Surveys his charge, unknowing of deceit:
(In order told, we make the sum compleat.)
Pleas'd with the false review, secure he lies,
610 And leaden slumbers press his drooping eyes.
Rushing impetuous forth, we strait prepare
A furious onset with the sound of war,
And shouting seize the God: our force t'evade
His various arts he soon resumes in aid:

A Lion

v. 613. *And shouting seize the God.* ———] *Proteus* has,
thro' the whole story, been describ'd as a God who knew all things;
it

- 615 A Lion now, he curls a furgy mane;
 Sudden, our bands a spotted Pard restrain;
 Then arm'd with tusks, and lightning in his eyes,
 A Boar's obfcener shape the God belies:
 On fpiry volumes there a Dragon rides ;
- 620 Here, from our ftrict embrace a Stream he glides :
 And laft, fublime his ftately growth he rears,
 A Tree, and well-difsembled foliage wears.
 Vain efforts! with fuperior pow'r comprefs'd,
 Me with reluctance thus the Seer addrefs'd.
- 625 Say, fon of *Atreus*, fay what God inspir'd
 This daring fraud, and what the boon defir'd?
 I thus; O thou, whole certain eye forefees
 The fix'd event of fate's remote decrees ;
 After long woes, and various toil endur'd,
- 630 Still on this defert Ifle my fleet is moor'd;

it may then be ask'd, how comes it that he did not foreknow the violence that was design'd againft his own perfon? and is it not a contradiction, that he who knew *Menelaus* without information, fhould not know that he lay in ambufh to feize him? The only answer that occurs to me is, that thefe enchanters never pretend to have an inherent fore-knowledge of events, but learn things by magical arts, and by recourfe to the fecrets of their profeffion; fo that *Proteus* having no fufpicion, had not confulted his art, and confequently might be furprized by *Menelaus*: So far is agreeable to the pretentions of fuch deluders: The Poet indeed has drawn him in colours ftronger than life; but Poetry adds or detracts at pleafure, and is allow'd frequently to ftep out of the way, to bring a foreign ornament into the ftory.

Unfriend-

Book IV. *HOMER'S ODYSSEY.* 183

Unfriend'd of the gales. All-knowing! say
 What Godhead interdicts the wat'ry way?
 What vows repentant will the Pow'r appease,
 To speed a prosp'rous voyage o'er the seas?

635 To *Jove*, (with stern regard the God replies,)
 And all th' offended synod of the skies;
 Just hecatombs with due devotion slain,
 Thy guilt absolv'd, a prosp'rous voyage gain.
 To the firm sanction of thy fate attend!

640 An exile thou, nor cheering face of friend,
 Nor sight of natal shore, nor regal dome
 Shalt yet enjoy, but still art doom'd to roam.
 Once more the *Nile*, who from the secret source
 Of *Jove's* high seat descends with sweepy force,

Must

v. 635. To *Jove*———just Hecatombs———Sec.] *Homer* continually inculcates morality, and piety to the Gods; he gives in this place a great instance of the necessity of it. *Menelaus* cannot succeed in any of his actions, till he pays due honours to the Gods; the neglect of sacrifice is the occasion of all his calamity, and the performance of it opens a way to all his future prosperity.

v. 643. ———Nile, who from the secret source

Of *Jove's* high seat descends———]

Homer, it must be confess'd, gives the epithet *Διωνύχης* generally to all rivers; if he had used it here peculiarly, there might have been room to have imagin'd that he had been acquainted with the true cause of the inundations of this famous river: The word *Διωνύχης* implies it: For it is now generally agreed, that these prodigious inundations proceed from the vast rains and the melting of the snows on the mountains of the Moon in *Ethiopia*, about the autumnal *Æquinox*; when those rains begin to fall, the river by
 degrees

645 Must view his billows white beneath thy oar,
 And altars blaze along his sanguine shore.
 Then will the Gods, with holy pomp ador'd,
 To thy long vows a safe return accord.

He ceas'd: heart-wounded with afflictive pain,

650 (Doom'd to repeat the perils of the main,
 A shelfy tract, and long!) O Seer, I cry,
 To the stern sanction of th'offended sky
 My prompt obedience bows. But deign to say,
 What fate propitious, or what dire dismay

655 Sustain those Peers, the reliques of our host,
 Whom I with *Nestor* on the *Phrygian* coast
 Embracing left? Must I the warriors weep,
 Whelm'd in the bottom of the monstrous deep?
 Or did the kind domestic friend deplore

660 The breathless heroes on their native shore?

Prefs not too far, reply'd the God; but cease
 To know, what known will violate thy peace:
 Too curious of their doom! with friendly woe
 Thy breast will heave, and tears eternal flow.

degrees increases, and as they abate, it decreases; the word *Διμερής* is therefore peculiarly proper when apply'd to the *Nile*; for tho' all rivers depend upon the waters that fall from the air, or *ἐκ Διός*, yet the *Nile* more especially; for when the rain ceases, the *Nile* consist only of seven empty channels.

Part

Book IV. *HOMER'S ODYSSEY.* 185

- 665 Part live; the rest, a lamentable train!
 Range the dark bounds of *Pluto's* dreary reign.
 Two, foremost in the roll of *Mars* renown'd,
 Whose arms with conquest in thy cause were crown'd,
 Fell by disastrous fate; by tempests tost,
- 670 A third lives wretched on a distant coast.
 By *Neptune* rescu'd from *Minerva's* hate,
 On *Gyre*, safe *Oilean Ajax* late,
 His ship o'erwhelm'd: but frowning on the floods,
 'Impious he roar'd defiance to the Gods:
- 675 To his own prowess all the glory gave,
 The pow'r defrauding who vouchsaf'd to save.
 This heard the raging Ruler of the main;
 His spear, indignant for such high disdain,
 He launch'd; dividing with his forky mace
- 680 Th' aerial summit from the marble base:
 The rock rush'd sea-ward, with impetuous roar
 Ingulf'd, and to th' abyss the boaster bore.

By

v. 682. ——— *And to th' abyss the boaster bore.*] It is in the original, *He dy'd, having drunk the salt water.* This verse has been omitted in many editions of *Homer*; and the Ancients, says *Eustathius*, blame *Aristarchus* for not marking it as a verse that ought to be rejected; the simplicity of it consists in the sense, more than in the terms, and it is unworthy of *Proteus* to treat the death of *Ajax* with pleasantry, as he seems to do, by adding *having drunk salt water*: But why may not *Proteus* be suppos'd to be serious, and the terms *Ἀλμυρὸν ὕδωρ*, to imply no more than that he was drown'd

- By *Juno's* guardian aid, the wat'ry Vast
 Secure of storms, your royal brother past:
- 685 'Till coasting nigh the Cape, where *Malea* throws
 Her spiry cliffs amid surrounding clouds;
 A whirling gulf tumultuous from the shore,
 Across the deep his lab'ring vessel bore.
 In an ill-fated hour the coast he gain'd,
- 690 Where late in regal pomp *Thyestes* reign'd;
 But when his hoary honours bow'd to fate,
Ægisthus govern'd in paternal state.
 The surges now subside, the tempest ends;
 From his tall ship the King of men descends:
- 695 There fondly thinks the Gods conclude his toil!
 Far from his own domain salutes the soil:
 With rapture oft the verge of *Greece* reviews,
 And the dear turf with tears of joy bedews.
 Him thus exulting on the distant strand,
- 700 A Spy distinguish'd from his airy stand;

drown'd in waves of the ocean? I know only one reason that can give any colour to the objection, viz. its being possibly become a vulgar expression, and used commonly in a ludicrous sense; then indeed it is to be avoided in Poetry; but it does not follow, because perhaps it might be used in this manner in the days of these Critics, that therefore it was so used in the days of *Homer*. What was poetical in the time of the Poet might be grown vulgar in the time of the Critics.

To

Book IV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 187

To bribe whose vigilance, *Ægisthus* told
 A mighty sum of ill-persuading gold:
 There watch'd this guardian of his guilty fear,
 'Till the twelfth moon had wheel'd her pale career;
 705 And now admonish'd by his eye, to court
 With terror wing'd conveys the dread report.
 Of deathful arts expert, his Lord employs
 The ministers of blood in dark surprize:
 And twenty youths in radiant mail incas'd,
 710 Close ambush'd nigh the spacious hall he plac'd.
 Then bids prepare the hospitable treat:
 Vain shews of love to veil his felon hate!
 To grace the victor's welcome from the wars,
 A train of coursers, and triumphal cars
 715 Magnificent he leads: the royal guest
 Thoughtless of ill, accepts the fraudulent feast.
 The troop forth issuing from the dark recess,
 With homicidal rage the King oppresses!
 So, whilst he feeds luxurious in the stall,
 720 The sov'reign of the herd is doom'd to fall.

The

v. 719. *So, whilst he feeds luxurious in the stall, &c.*] Dacier translates βῦν, by *taureau* a bull; and misunderstands *Eustathius* who directly says, that in the 2^d *Iliad* the Poet compares *Agamemnon* to a bull, in this place to an ox, ταύρος ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνδρῶν. The one was undoubtedly design'd to describe the courage

The partners of his fame and toils at *Troy*,
 Around their Lord, a mighty ruin! lye:
 Mix'd with the brave, the base invaders bleed;
Ægisthus sole survives to boast the deed.

725 He said; chill horrors shook my shiv'ring soul,
 Rack'd with convulsive pangs in dust I roul;
 And hate, in madness of extreme despair,
 To view the sun, or breathe the vital air.
 But when superior to the rage of woe,

730 I stood restor'd, and tears had ceas'd to flow;
 Lenient of grief, the pitying God began.—
 Forget the brother, and resume the man:
 To fate's supreme dispose the dead resign,
 That care be fate's, a speedy passage thine.

735 Still lives the wretch who wrought the death deplor'd
 But lives a victim for thy vengeful sword;
 Unless with filial rage *Orestes* glow,
 And swift prevent the meditated blow:
 You timely will return a welcome guest,

740 With him to share the sad funereal feast.

He said: new thoughts my beating heart employ,
 My gloomy soul receives a gleam of joy.

courage and majestic port of a warrior, the other to give us an
 image of a Prince falling in full peace and plenty, *ὡς Πάριος*
ἐσθλῆς.

Fair

Fair hope revives; and eager I address
The prescient Godhead to reveal the rest.

745 The doom decreed of those disastrous Two
I've heard with pain, but oh! the tale pursue;
What third brave son of *Mars* the fates constrain
To roam the howling desert of the main:
Or in eternal shade if cold he lies,

750 Provoke new sorrow from these grateful eyes.

That

v. 749. *Or in eternal shade if cold he lies.*] *Proteus* in the beginning of his relation had said, that one person was alive, and remain'd enclosed by the ocean: How then comes *Menelaus* here to say, Give me an account of that other person who is alive, or dead? Perhaps the sorrow which *Menelaus* conceived for his friend *Ulysses*, might make him fear the worst; and *Proteus* adding *enclos'd by the ocean*, might give a suspicion that he was dead, the words being capable of ambiguity. However this be, it sets the friendship of *Menelaus* in a strong light: where friendship is sincere, a state of uncertainty is a state of fears, we dread even possibilities, and give them an imaginary certainty. Upon this, one of the finest compliments that a Poet ever made to a patron turns, that of *Horace* to *Mæcenas*, in the first of the *Epodes*.

It may not perhaps be disagreeable to the Reader to observe, that *Virgil* has borrow'd this story of *Proteus* from *Homer*, and translated it almost literally. *Rapine* says, that *Homer's* description is more ingenious and fuller of invention, but *Virgil's* more judicious. I wish that Critic had given his reasons for his opinion. I believe in general, the plan of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is allow'd by the best of Critics to be more perfect than that of the *Æneis*. *Homer*, with respect to the unity of time, has the advantage very manifestly; *Rapine* confesses it, and *Aristotle* proposes him as an example to all Epic Authors. Where then is the superiority of judgment? Is it that there are more fabulous, I mean incredible, stories in *Homer* than *Virgil*? as that of the *Cyclops*, the ships of *Alcinous*, &c. *Virgil* has imitated most of these bold fables, and the story of the ships of *Alcinous* is not more incredible than the transformation of the ships of *Æneas*. But this is too large a subject

That chief (rejoin'd the God) his race derives
 From *Inbaca*, and wond'rous woes survives;
Laertes' son: girt with circumfluous tides,
 He still calamitous constraint abides.

755 Him in *Calyffe's* cave of late I view'd,
 When streaming grief his faded cheek bedew'd.
 But vain his pray'r, his arts are vain to move
 Th' enamour'd Goddess, or elude her love:

Subject to be discuss'd in the compass of these Annotations. In particular passages I freely allow the preference to *Virgil*, as in the descent of *Aeneas* into hell, &c. but in this story of *Proteus*, I cannot see any superiority of judgment. *Virgil* is little more than a translator; to shew the particulars would be too tedious: I refer it to the Reader to compare the two Authors, and shall only instance in one passage.

Ἡμεῖς δ' αἰψ' ἰαχόντις ἐπιστοίμεθ', ἀμφὶ δὲ χεῖρας,
 Βάλλομεν. ὃ δ' ὁ γέρον δούλις ἐπαλάθετο τέχνης,
 Ἄλλ' ἦτοι ἀρετίῃσ' αἰὲν ἔμελλε κέρτατος
 Ἀντὶς ἔπειτα δρᾶμεν, καὶ ἀνάρδαις ἠδὲ μέγας οὔτ',
 Πίνετο δ' ὕγρον ὕδωρ, καὶ δένδρεον ὑπεπέτλων, &c.

*Cum clamore ruit magno, manisque jacentem
 Occupat: ille sua contra non immemor artis,
 Omnia transformat sese in miracula rerum,
 Ignemque, horribilemque feram, flavisimamque liquentem. &c.*

Homer has a manifest advantage in the occasion of the story: The loss of a few bees seems to be a cause too trivial for an undertaking so great as the surprize of a Deity; whereas the whole happiness of *Menelaus* depends upon this consultation of *Proteus*: This is a far more important cause, and consequently in this respect something more is due to *Homer*, than the sole honour of an inventor.

His

Book IV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 191

His vessel sunk, and dear companions lost,

760 He lives reluctant on a foreign coast.

But oh belov'd by heav'n! reserv'd to thee

A happier lot the smiling fates decree:

Free from that law, beneath whose mortal sway

Matter is chang'd, and varying forms decay;

765 *Elysium* shall be thine; the blissful plains

Of utmost earth, where *Rhadamanthus* reigns.

Joys ever-young, unmix'd with pain or fear,

Fill the wide circle of th' eternal year:

Stern winter smiles on that auspicious clime:

770 The fields are florid with unfading prime:

From the bleak pole no winds inclement blow,

Mold the round hail, or flake the fleecy snow;

v. 765. *Elysium shall be thine; the blissful plains*
Of utmost earth, &c. ———

This is the only place in which the *Elysian* field is mention'd in *Homer*. The conjectures of the Ancients are very various about it: *Plato* in his *Phad.* places it in *caelo stellato*, or the region of the Stars; but since *Homer* fixes it, *eis arispara yains*, or (as *Milton* expresses it) at the *earth's green end*, I will pass over the conjectures of others, especially since the *μυκάδων Νήσος*, by which others express *Elysium*, confines it to this world.

Strabo, says *Eustathius*, places it not far from *Maurusia*, that lies near the Streights: It is suppos'd by *Bochart*, as *Dacier* observes, that the fable is of *Phenician* extraction, that *Alixuth* in *Hebrew* signifies joy or exultation, which word the *Greeks*, adapting to their way of pronunciation, call'd *Elysins*. If this be true, I should come into an opinion that has much prevail'd, that the *Greeks* had heard of *Paradise* from the *Hebrews*; and that the *Hebrews* describing *Paradise* as a place of *Alixuth*, or joy, gave occasion to all the fables of the *Grecian Elysium*.

But

192 *HOMER'S ODYSSEY*. Book IV.

But from the breezy deep, the Blest inhale
The fragrant murmurs of the western gale.

775 This grace peculiar will the Gods afford
To thee the Son of *Jove*, and beauteous *Helen's* Lord.

He ceas'd, and plunging in the vast profound,
Beneath the God the whirling billows bound.
Then speeding back, involv'd in various thought,

780 My friends attending at the shore I fought.
Arriv'd, the rage of hunger we controll,
'Till night with silent shade invests the pole;
Then lose the cares of life in pleasing rest.——
Soon as the morn reveals the roscate East,

785 With sails we wing the masts, our anchors weigh,
Unmoor the fleet, and rush into the sea.
Rang'd on the banks, beneath our equal oars
White curl the waves, and the vex'd ocean roars.
Then steering backward from the *Pharian* Isle,

790 We gain the stream of *Jove*-descended *Nile*:
There quit the ships, and on the destin'd shore
With ritual hecatombs the Gods adore:
Their wrath aton'd, to *Agamemnon's* name
A Cenotaph I raise of deathless fame.

795 These rites to piety and grief discharg'd,
The friendly Gods a springing gale enlarg'd:

The

Book IV. *HOMER'S ODYSSEY*. 193

The fleet swift tilting o'er the surges flew,

'Till *Grecian* cliffs appear'd, a blissful view !

Thy patient ear hath heard me long relate

800 A story, fruitful of disastrous fate :

And now, young Prince, indulge my fond request ;

Be *Sparta* honour'd with his royal guest,

'Till from his eastern goal, the joyous sun

His twelfth diurnal race begins to run.

805 Mean-time my train the friendly gifts prepare,

Three sprightly coursers, and a polish'd car :

With these, a goblet of capacious mold,

Figur'd with art to dignify the gold,

(Form'd for libation to the Gods,) shall prove

810 A pledge and monument of sacred love.

My quick return, young *Ithacus* rejoin'd,

Damps the warm wishes of my raptur'd mind :

Did not my fate my needful haste constrain,

Charm'd by your speech, so graceful and humane,

815 Lost in delight the circling year wou'd roll,

While deep attention fix'd my list'ning soul.

v. 806. *Three sprightly coursers.*] How comes it to pass that *Menelaus* proffers three horses to *Telemachus* ? This was a complete set among the Ancients, they used one Pole-horse and two leaders. *Enstathius*.

But now to *Pyle* permit my destin'd way,

My lov'd associates chide my long delay.

In dear remembrance of your royal grace,

820 I take the present of the promis'd Vase ;

The courfers for the champion sports, retain;

That gift our barren rocks will render vain :

Horrid

v. 822. *That gift our barren rocks will render vain.*] This passage where *Telemachus* refuses the horses has been much observ'd, and turn'd to a moral sense, viz. as a lesson to men to desire nothing but what is suitable to their conditions. *Horace* has introduced it into his *Epistles*.

*Hand malè Telemachus proles patientis Ulyssæi ;
Non est aptus equis Ithacæ locus, ut neque planis
Porrectus spatiis, nec multa prodigus herbae :
Atvide, magis apta tibi tua dona relinquam.*

This is the reason why *Ulysses* (as *Enstathius* observes upon the 10th of the *Iliads*) leaves the horses of *Rhesus* to the disposal of *Diomedes*; so that the same spirit of Wisdom reign'd in *Telemachus*, that was so remarkable in *Ulysses*. This is the reason why *Menelaus* smil'd; it was not at the frankness or simplicity of *Telemachus*, but it was a smile of joy, to see the young Prince inherit his father's wisdom.

It is the remark of *Enstathius*, that *Telemachus* is far from exalting the nature of his country; he confesses it to be barren, and more barren than the neighbouring Islands; yet that natural and laudable affection which all worthy persons have for their country makes him prefer it to places of a more happy situation. This appears to me a replication to what *Menelaus* had before offer'd concerning the transplantation of *Ulysses* to *Sparta*; this is contain'd in *ἡμετέριον*; and then the meaning is, 'Tis true *Ithaca* is a barren region, yet more desirable than this country of *Lacedæmon*, this *ἡμετέριον γαῖαν*. It is the more probable from the offer of horses which *Menelaus* had then made, and is also another reason for the smile of *Menelaus*.

Enstathius

Book IV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 195

- Horrid with cliffs, our meagre land allows
Thin herbage for the mountain-goat to browse,
825 But neither mead nor plain supplies, to feed
The sprightly courser, or indulge his speed :
To sea-surrounded realms the Gods assign
Small tract of fertile lawn, the least to mine.
His hand the King with tender passion press'd,
830 And smiling thus, the royal Youth address'd :
O early worth ! a soul so wise, and young,
Proclaims you from the sage *Ulysses* sprung.
Selected from my stores, of matchless price
An urn shall recompence your prudent choice :
835 Not mean the massy mold, of silver grac'd
By *Vulcan*'s art, the verge with gold enchas'd :
A pledge the sceptred pow'r of *Sidon* gave,
When to his realm I plow'd the orient wave.

Ernstathius remarks that *Menelaus*, tho' he has expressed the greatest friendship for *Ulysses*, yet makes no offer to restore the fortunes of his friend by any military assistance ; tho' he had a most fair opportunity given him to repay the past kindness of *Ulysses* to his wife *Penelope*, and his son *Telemachus* ; and how comes *Telemachus* not to ask it either of *Nesior* or *Menelaus* ? He answers, that this depended upon the uncertainty they were yet under, concerning the life of *Ulysses*. But the truer reason in my opinion is, that the nature of Epic Poetry requires a contrary conduct : The Heroe of the Poem is to be the chief agent, and the re-establishment of his fortunes must be owing to his own wisdom and valour. I have enlarg'd upon this already, so that there is no occasion in this place to insist upon it.

196 *HOMER'S ODYSSEY*. Book IV.

- Thus they alternate; while with artful care
840 The menial train the regal feast prepare:
The firstlings of the flock are doom'd to dye;
Rich fragrant wines the cheering bowl supply;
A female band the gift of *Ceres* bring;
And the gilt roofs with genial triumph ring.
- 845 Mean-while, in *Ithaca*, the Suitor-pow'rs
In active games divide their jovial hours:
In *Areas* vary'd with mosaic art,
Some whirl the disk, and some the jav'lin dart.
Aside, sequester'd from the vast resort,
- 850 *Antinous* late spectator of the sport;
With great *Euymachus*, of worth confest,
And high descent, superior to the rest;
Whom young *Noëmon* lowly thus address.
- My ship equip'd within the neighb'ring port,
855 The Prince, departing for the *Pylia* court,
Requested for his speed; but, courteous, say
When steers he home, or why this long delay?
For *Elis* I shou'd sail with utmost speed,
T'import twelve mares which there luxurious feed,
- 860 And twelve young mules, a strong laborious race,
New to the plow, unpractis'd in the trace.

Unknow-

Book IV. *HOMER'S ODYSSEY.* 197

- Unknowing of the course to *Pyle* design'd,
A sudden horror seiz'd on either mind :
The Prince in rural bow'r they fondly thought,
865 Numb'ring his flocks and herds, not far remote.
Relate, *Antinous* cries, devoid of guile,
When spread the Prince his sail for distant *Pyle* ?
Did chosen chiefs across the gulphy main
Attend his voyage, or domestic train ?
870 Spontaneous did you speed his secret course,
Or was the vessel seiz'd by fraud or force ?
With willing duty, not reluctant mind,
(*Noëmon* cry'd) the vessel was resign'd.
Who in the balance, with the great affairs
875 Of courts, presume to weigh their private cares ?
With him, the peerage next in pow'r to you :
And *Mentor*, captain of the lordly crew,
Or some Celestial in his rev'rend form,
Safe from the secret rock and adverse storm,
880 Pilots their course : For when the glimm'ring ray
Of yester dawn disclos'd the tender day,
Mentor himself I saw, and much admir'd.——
Then ceas'd the Youth, and from the court retir'd,
Confounded and appall'd, th'unfinish'd game
885 The Suitors quit, and all to council came :

198 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book IV.

Antinous first th'assembled Peers addrest,

Rage sparkling in his eyes, and burning in his breast.

O shame to manhood! shall one daring boy

The scheme of all our happiness destroy?

890 Fly unperceiv'd, seducing half the flow'r

Of nobles, and invite a foreign pow'r?

The pond'rous engine rais'd to crush us all,

Recoiling, on his head is sure to fall.

Instant prepare me, on the neighb'ring strand,

895 With twenty chosen mates a vessel mann'd;

For ambush'd close beneath the *Samian* shore

His ship returning shall my spies explore:

v. 896. *For ambush'd close, &c.*] We have here another use which the Poet makes of the voyage of *Telemachus*. *Eustathius* remarks that these incidents not only diversify but enliven the Poem. But it may be ask'd why the Poet makes not use of so fair an opportunity to insert a gallant action of *Telemachus*, and draw him not as eluding, but defeating his adversaries? The answer is easy; That the Suitors sail'd compleatly arm'd, and *Telemachus* unprovided of any weapons: and therefore *Homer* consults credibility, and forbears to paint his young Heroe in the colours of a Knight in Romance, who upon all disadvantages engages and defeats his opposers. But then to what purpose is this ambush of the Suitors, and what part of the design of the Poem is carry'd on by it? The very chief aim of it; To shew the sufferings of *Ulysses*: He is unfortunate in all relations of life, as a King, as an husband, and here very eminently as a father; these sufferings are laid down in the proposition of the *Odyssey* as essential to the Poem, and consequently this ambush laid by the Suitors against the life of *Telemachus* is an essential ornament.

He

He soon his rashness shall with life atone,
Seek for his father's fate, but find his own.

900 With vast applause the sentence all approve ;
Then rise, and to the feastful hall remove :

Swift to the Queen the Herald *Medon* ran,
Who heard the consult of the dire Divan :
Before her dome the royal matron stands,

905 And thus the message of his haste demands.

What will the Suitors ? must my servant train
Th'allotted labours of the day refrain,

v. 906. *The speech of Penelope.*] *Longinus* in particular commends this speech as a true picture of a person that feels various emotions of soul, and is born by every gust of passion from sentiment to sentiment, with sudden and unexpected transitions. There is some obscurity in the *Greek*, this arises from the warmth with which she speaks, she has not leisure to explain her self fully, a circumstance natural to a person in anger.

Penelope gives a very beautiful picture of *Ulysses*: "The best of Princes are allow'd to have their favourites, and give a greater share of affection than ordinary to particular persons. But *Ulysses* was a father to all his people alike, and loved them all as his children; a father, tho' he bears a more tender affection on to one child than to another, yet shews them all an equal treatment; thus also a good King is not sway'd by inclination, but justice; towards all his subjects. *Dacier*."

One circumstance is very remarkable, and gives us a full view of a person in anger; at the very sight of *Medon* *Penelope* flies out into passion, she gives him not time to speak one syllable, but speaks her self as if all the Suitors were present, and reproaches them in the person of *Medon*, tho' *Medon* is just to her and *Ulysses*; but anger is an undistinguishing passion. What she says of ingratitude, recalls to my memory what is to be found in *Laertius* & *Aristotle* being ask'd what thing upon earth soonest grew old ? reply'd, an Obligation. *Τὸ ταχιστα γηράσκει; respondit, χάρις.*

200 *HOMER'S ODYSSEY*. Book IV.

For them to form some exquisite repast?
Heav'n grant this festival may prove their last!

910 Or if they still must live, from me remove
The double plague of luxury and love!
Forbear, ye sons of insolence! forbear,
In riot to consume a wretched heir.
In the young soul illustrious thought to raise,

915 Were ye not tutor'd with *Ulysses'* praise?
Have not your fathers oft my Lord defin'd,
Gentle of speech, beneficent of mind?
Some Kings with arbitrary rage devour,
Or in their tyrant-Minions vest the pow'r;

920 *Ulysses* let no partial favours fall,
The people's parent, he protected all:
But absent now, perfidious and ingrate!
His stores ye ravage, and usurp his state.

He thus; O were the woes you speak the worst!
925 They form a deed more odious and accurst;
More dreadful than your boding soul divines;
But pitying *Jove* avert the dire designs!
The darling object of your royal care
Is mark'd to perish in a deathful snare;

930 Before he anchors in his native port,
From *Pyle* re-sailing and the *Spartan* court,

Horrid

Horrid to speak! in ambush is decreed

The hope and heir of *Ithaca* to bleed!

Sudden she sunk beneath the weighty woes;

935 The vital streams a chilling horror froze:

The big round tear stands trembling in her eye,

And on her tongue imperfect accents dye.

At length, in tender language, interwove

With sighs, she thus express'd her anxious love.

940 Why rashly wou'd my son his fate explore,

Ride the wild waves, and quit the safer shore?

Did he, with all the greatly wretched, crave

A blank oblivion, and untimely grave?

'Tis not, reply'd the Sage, to *Medon* giv'n.

945 To know, if some inhabitant of heav'n,

In his young breast the daring thought inspir'd:

Or if alone with filial duty fir'd,

The winds and waves he tempts in early bloom,

Studious to learn his absent father's doom.

v. 941. *Ride the wild waves*—] Were this passage to be render'd literally, it would run thus; *climb the swift ships, which are horses to men on the seas.* *Eusebius* observes the allusion is very just, and that the only doubt is, whether it be brought in opportunely by *Penelope*? it may be doubted, if the mind could find leisure to introduce such allusions? *Dacier* answers, that *Penelope* speaks thus thro' indignation: The grief that she conceives at the hardness of men, in finding out a way to pass the seas as well as land, furnished her with these figures very naturally, for figures are agreeable to passion.

- 950 The Sage retir'd : Unable to controul
 The mighty griefs that swell her lab'ring soul,
 Rolling convulsive on the floor, is seen
 The piteous object of a prostrate Queen.
 Words to her dumb complaint a pause supplies,
 955 And breath, to waste in unavailing cries.
 Around their sov'reign wept the menial fair,
 To whom she thus address'd her deep despair.
 Behold a wretch whom all the Gods consign
 To woe! Did ever sorrows equal mine ?
 960 Long to my joys my dearest Lord is lost,
 His country's buckler, and the *Grecian* boast :
 Now from my fond embrace by tempests torn,
 Our other column of the state is born :
 Nor took a kind adieu, nor sought consent!——
 965 Unkind confed'rates in his dire intent !
 Ill suits it with your shews of duteous zeal,
 From me the purpos'd voyage to conceal :
 Tho' at the solemn midnight hour he rose,
 Why did you fear to trouble my repose ?
 970 He either had obey'd my fond desire,
 Or seen his mother pierc'd with grief expire.
 Bid *Dolius* quick attend, the faithful slave
 Whom to my nuptial train *Icarus* gave,

To tend the fruit-groves: With incessant speed

975 He shall this violence of death decreed,
To good *Laertes* tell. Experienc'd age
May timely intercept their ruffian rage,
Convene the tribes, the murd'rous plot reveal,
And to their pow'r to save his race appeal.

980 Then *Eurycea* thus. My dearest dread!
Tho' to the sword I bow this hoary head,
Or if a dungeon be the pain decreed,
I own me conscious of th'unpleasing deed:
Auxiliar to his flight, my aid implor'd,
985 With wine and viands I the vessel stor'd:
A solemn oath impos'd the secret seal'd,
'Till the twelfth dawn the light of heav'n reveal'd.
Dreading th'effect of a fond mother's fear,
He dar'd not violate your royal ear.

990 But bathe, and in imperial robes array'd,
* *Mi-* Pay due devotions to the * martial maid,
nerua. And rest affianc'd in her guardian aid.
Send not to good *Laertes*, nor engage
In toils of state the miseries of age:

995 'Tis impious to surmize, the pow'rs divine
To ruin doom the *Jove*-descended line:

204 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book IV.

Long shall the race of just *Arceſius* reign;
And Iſles remote enlarge his old domain.

The Queen her ſpeech with calm attention hears,

1000 Her eyes refrain the ſilver-ſtreaming tears :
She bathes, and rob'd, the ſacred dome aſcends ;
Her pious ſpeed a female train attends :
The ſalted cakes in caniſters are laid,
And thus the Queen invokes *Minerva's* aid.

1005 Daughter, divine of *Jove*, whoſe arm can wield
Th'avenging bolt, and ſhake the dreadful ſhield !

v. 998. *And Iſles remote enlarge his old domain.*] Dacier offers a Criticiſm upon theſe laſt words of *Emryclea*: It cannot be imagin'd theſe fertile fields can be ſpoken of *Ithaca*, *Plutarch's* deſcription of it is entirely contradictory to this: "*Ithaca*, ſays he, is rough " and mountainous, fit only to breed goats ; upon cultivation it " ſcarce yields any fruits, and theſe ſo worthleſs, as ſcarce to recompence the labour of gathering." *Homer* therefore by this expreſſion intended the other dominions of *Ulyſſes*, ſuch as *Cephalenia*, &c.

But I queſtion not that the whole dominions of *Ulyſſes* are included, *Ithaca* as well as *Cephalenia* ; for tho' *Ithaca* was mountainous, yet the vallies were fruitful, according to the deſcription of it in the 13th of the *Odyssey*.

*The rugged ſoil allows no level ſpace
For flying chariots, or the rapid race;
Yet not ungrateful to the Peaſant's pain,
Suffices fulneſs to the ſwelling grain:
The loaded trees their various fruits produce,
And cloſting grapes afford a gen'rous juice, &c.*

As for her remark upon *ἀνέριος*, it is of no validity ; the word ſtands in oppoſition to *Διμήνα*, and implies no more than *here*, or at a diſtance in general.

Book IV. *HOMER'S ODYSSEY.* 205

If e'er *Ulysses* to thy fane prefer'd
The best and choicest of his flock and herd;
Hear, Goddess, hear, by those oblations won ;

1010 And for the pious fire preserve the son :
His wish'd return with happy pow'r befriend,
And on the Suitors let thy wrath descend.

She ceas'd ; shrill ecstasies of joy declare
The fav'ring Goddess present to the pray'r :

1015 The Suitors heard, and deem'd the mirthful voice
A signal of her Hymeneal choice :

v. 1015. *The Suitors heard, and deem'd the mirthful voice,
A signal of her hymeneal choice.*]

It may be ask'd whence this conjecture of the Suitors arises? *Penelope* is describ'd as weeping grievously, and fainting away, and yet immediately the Suitors conclude she is preparing for the Nuptials. *Eustathius* answers, that undoubtedly the Suitors understood the Queen had purify'd her self with water, and supplicated the Goddess *Minerva*, tho' the Poet omits the relation of such little particularities. But whence is it that the Poet gives a greater share of wisdom to *Euryclea* than to *Penelope*? *Penelope* commands a servant to fly with the news of the absence of *Telemachus* to *Laertes*, which could not at all advantage *Telemachus*, and only grieve *Laertes* : *Euryclea* immediately diverts her from that vain intention, advises her to have recourse to heaven, and not add misery to the already miserable *Laertes* : This is Wisdom in *Euryclea*. But it must be confess'd that the other is Nature in *Penelope* : *Euryclea* is calm, *Penelope* in a passion : and *Homer* would have been a very bad painter of human Nature, if he had drawn *Penelope* thus heated with passion in the mild temper of *Euryclea* ; grief and resentment give *Penelope* no time to deliberate, whereas *Euryclea* is less concern'd, and consequently capable of thinking with more tranquillity.

While

206 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book IV.

Whilst one most jovial thus accosts the board;

" Too late the Queen selects a second lord :

" In evil hour the nuptial rite intends,

1020 " When o'er her son disastrous death impends."

Thus he, unskill'd of what the fates provide !

But with severe rebuke *Antinous* cry'd.

These empty vaunts will make the voyage vain ;

Alarm not with discourse the menial train :

1025 The great event with silent hope attend ;

Our deeds alone our council must commend.

His speech thus ended short, he frowning rose,

And twenty chiefs renown'd for valour chose :

Down to the strand he speeds with haughty strides,

1030 Where anchor'd in the bay the vessel rides ;

Replete with mail, and military store,

In all her tackle trim, to quit the shore.

The desp'rate crew ascend, unfurl the sails ;

(The sea-ward prow invites the tardy gales).

1035 Then take repast, 'till *Hesperus* display'd

His golden circlet in the western shade.

v. 1022. *With rebuke severe Antinous cry'd.*] *Antinous* speaks thus in return to what had been before said by one of the Suitors concerning *Telemachus*, viz. " the Queen little imagines that her " son's death approaches ;" he fears lest *Penelope* should know their intentions, and hinder their measures by raising the subjects of *Ithaca* that still retain'd their fidelity. *Dacier*.

Mean-

Mean-time the Queen without refection due,
Heart-wounded, to the bed of state withdrew :

In her sad breast the Prince's fortunes roul,

1040 And hope and doubt alternate seize her soul.

So when the wood-man's toyl her cave furrounds

And with the hunter's cry the grove resounds ;

With grief and rage the mother-lion stung,

Fearless herself, yet trembles for her young.

1045 While pensive in the silent slumb'rous shade,

Sleep's gentle pow'rs her drooping eyes invade ;

Minerva, life-like on imbody'd air,

Impress'd the form of *Iphthima* the fair :

(*Icarus*')

v. 1041. *So when the woodman's toyl, &c.*] The Poet, to shew the majesty and high spirit of *Penelope*, compares her to a Lioness: He manages the allusion very artfully: he describes the Lioness not as exerting any dreadful act of violence, (for such a comparison is only proper to be apply'd to a Heroe) but inclosed by her enemies; which at once shews both her danger and nobleness of spirit under it: It is in the *Greek* δάλιον κύκλον, which may signify either, a circle of toils or nets, or a circle of enemies: The former is perhaps preferable, as corresponding best with the condition of *Penelope*, who was surrounded with the secret ambushes and snares of the Suitors. *Eustathius*.

v. 1047. *Minerva, life-like on imbody'd air,*
Impress the form, &c.]

We have here an imaginary Being introduc'd by the Poet: The whole is manag'd with great judgment; It is short, because it has not a direct and immediate relation to the progress of the Poem, and because such imaginary entercourses have ever been looked upon as sudden in appearance, and as sudden in vanishing away.

The

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(*Icarus*' daughter she, whose blooming charms

1050 Allur'd *Eumelus* to her virgin-arms ;

A sceptred Lord, who o'er the fruitful plain

Of *Theffaly* wide stretch'd his ample reign :)

As *Pallas* will'd, along the sable skies

To calm the Queen the Phantom-sister flies.

1055 Swift on the regal dome descending right,

The bolted Valves are pervious to her flight.

Close to her head the pleasing vision stands,

And thus performs *Minerva*'s high commands.

O why, *Penelope*, this causeless fear,

1060 To render sleep's soft blessing unsincere ?

Alike devote to sorrow's dire extreme

The day reflection, and the midnight dream !

The use the Poet makes of it, is to relieve *Penelope* from the extremity of despair, that she may act her part in the future scenes with courage and constancy. We see it is *Minerva* who sends this phantom to *Penelope* to comfort her : Now this is an allegory to express that as soon as the violence of sorrow was over, the mind of *Penelope* return'd to some degree of tranquillity : *Minerva* is no more than the result of her own reflection and wisdom, which banish'd from her breast those melancholy apprehensions. The manner likewise of its introduction is not less judicious ; the mind is apt to dwell upon those objects in sleep which make a deep impression when awake : This is the foundation of the Poet's fiction ; it is no more than a dream which he here describes, but he cloaths it with a body, gives it a momentary existence, and by this method exalts a low circumstance into dignity and Poetry.

Thy

Thy son, the Gods propitious will restore,
And bid thee cease his absence to deplore.

1065 To whom the Queen, (whilst yet her pensive mind
Was in the silent gates of sleep confin'd)

O sister, to my soul for ever dear,

Why this first visit to reprove my fear?

How in a realm so distant shou'd you know

1070 From what deep source my ceaseless sorrows flow?

To all my hope my royal Lord is lost,

His country's buckler, and the Grecian boast:

And with consummate woe to weigh me down,

The heir of all his honours, and his crown.

v. 1073. *And with consummate woe, &c.*] In the original, *Penelope* says plainly, she is more concern'd for her son than her husband. I shall translate *Dacier's* observation upon this passage. We ought not to reproach *Penelope* for this seemingly shocking declaration, in preferring a son to an husband: Her sentiment is natural and just; she had all the reason in the world to believe that *Ulysses* was dead, so that all her hopes, all her affection was entirely placed upon *Telemachus*: His loss therefore must unavoidably touch her with the highest degree of sensibility; if he is lost, she can have recourse to no second comfort. But why may we not allow the reason which *Penelope* her self gives for this superiority of sorrow for *Telemachus*? "*Telemachus*, says she, is unexperienc'd in " the world, and unable to contend with difficulties; whereas *Ulysses* " knew how to extricate himself upon all emergencies." This is a sufficient reason why she should fear more for *Telemachus* than *Ulysses*: Her affection might be greater for *Ulysses* than *Telemachus*, yet her fears might be stronger for the son than the husband, *Ulysses* being capable to surmount dangers by experience, *Telemachus* being new to all difficulties.

My

1075 My darling son is fled! an easy prey
 To the fierce storms, or men more fierce than they:
 Who in a league of blood associates sworn,
 Will intercept th'unwary Youth's return.

Courage resume, the shadowy form reply'd,
 1080 In the protecting care of heav'n confide:
 On him attends the blue-ey'd martial Maid;
 What earthly can implore a surer aid?
 Me now the guardian Goddess deigns to send,
 To bid thee patient his return attend.

1085 The Queen replies: If in the blest abodes,
 A Goddess thou, hast commerce with the Gods;
 Say, breathes my Lord the blissful realm of light,
 Or lies he wrapt in ever-during night?

Enquire not of his doom, the Phantom cries,
 1090 I speak not all the counsel of the skies:

Nor

v. 1089. *Enquire not of his doom, &c.*] It may be ask'd what is the reason of this conduct, and why should the Phantom refuse to relate any thing concerning the condition of *Ulysses*? *Eustathius* answers, that if the Phantom had related the full truth of the story, the Poem had been at an end; the very constitution of it requires that *Ulysses* should arrive unknown to all, but chiefly to his wife, as will appear in the prosecution of the story: The question is very natural for an affectionate wife to make concerning an absent husband; but this being an improper place for the discovery, the Poet defers the solution of it, 'till the unravelling of the whole in the conclusion of the Poem.

The

Book IV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 211

Nor must indulge with vain discourse, or long,
The windy satisfaction of the tongue.

Swift thro' the valves the visionary fair
Repas'd, and viewless mix'd with common air.

1095 The Queen awakes, deliver'd of her woes;
With florid joy her heart dilating glows:
The vision, manifest of future fate,
Makes her with hope her son's arrival wait.

Mean-time the Suitors plow the wat'ry plain,

1100 *Telemachus* in thought already slain!
When sight of less'ning *Ithaca* was lost,
Their sail directed for the *Samian* coast,
A small but verdant Isle appear'd in view,
And *Asteris* th'advancing Pilot knew:

1105 An ample port the rocks projected form,
To break the rowling waves, and ruffling storm:

That

The action of this book takes up the space of two nights and one day, so that from the opening of the Poem to the introduction of *Ulysses* are six days compleated.

But how long a time *Telemachus* afterwards stay'd with *Mene-laus*, is a question which has employ'd some modern *French* Critics; one of which maintains, that he stay'd no longer than these two nights at *Lacedamon*: But it is evident from the sequel of the *Odyssey*, that *Telemachus* arriv'd again at *Ithaca* two days after *Ulysses*; but *Ulysses* was twenty nine days in passing from *Ogygia* to *Ithaca*, and consequently during that whole time *Telemachus* must have been absent from *Ithaca*. The ground of that Critick's mis-

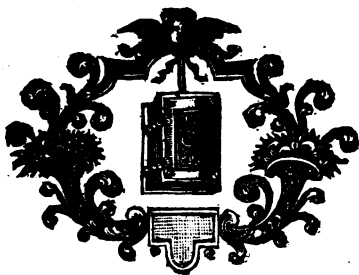
take

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That safe recess they gain with happy speed,
And in close ambush wait the murd'rous deed.

take was from the silence of *Homer* as to the exact time of his stay, which was of no importance, being distinguish'd by no action, and only in an Episodical part. The same thing led me into the like error in the 33^d Note on the second book, where it is said that *Telemachus* return'd to *Ithaca* in less than twelve days.

The End of the First Volume.



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